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MAGAZINE OF ART

DECEMBER 1952 75 CENTS THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF ARTS



KENNETH C. LINDSAY: **KANDINSKY'S METHOD & CONTEMPORARY CRITICISM**

FORBES WATSON: **ARTHUR BOWEN DAVIES**

ANNIE JOLY-SEGALEN: **PAUL GAUGUIN AND VICTOR SEGALEN**

JOSE CLEMENTE OROZCO: **FRAGMENTS OF AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY**

ROLAND PENROSE: **THE PLEASURES AND MISERIES OF COLLECTING**

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WORDS AND PICTURES

ON October 1st last, the Editor sent off a request to *MAGAZINE OF ART*'s subscribers asking for their support. They answered at once, as they did to last spring's questionnaire, and it is a pleasure to be able to thank them here. The response was in every way magnificent: in the surprising number of individual contributors, in the large total of the amount they sent in to the magazine, in the warmth and friendliness of their accompanying letters. Altogether, this was pleasing evidence of our readers' interest and of their readiness to show it in practical form, and—is it necessary to say—it gladdened the hearts of the staff, the editorial board and the trustees of The American Federation of Arts. But it did more than this. It confirmed the Federation in the wisdom of its forty-three years' support of the magazine, and enabled it to ask for, and receive, the now necessary increased support from patrons outside the Federation's trustees. Thus *MAGAZINE OF ART* has the double assurance that it is striking in the direction of its readers' needs and enjoyment, and that that direction will continue to have the backing merited by our readers' generous response.

It is no secret that publishing is becoming increasingly costly. One of the penalties we pay for our country's size—which brings us so many advantages—is that publishing costs become more and more geared to mass circulations, and that anything, whether book or magazine, designed for a smaller audience has trouble making ends meet. Thus today periodicals in the arts are not only absolutely fewer in number than twenty-five years ago, but with the great proliferation of mass media they have relatively fallen almost into insignificance. For a review like ours, where illustrations are a necessity, the problem is even more acute, because the expense is greater for us than for a literary review, and because it can be borne with such ease by magazines whose interest in the visual arts is at best only incidental, and which reproduce the work of art as they would any other item in the news.

But if illustrations are needed in a magazine of art, what of the words? Is it not after all the work itself which counts, and failing this an illustration of it? Why all the discussion; why not, essentially, a magazine of pictures, different perhaps from others in having the right pictures, but still made up mainly of illustrations?

There is indeed a plethora of pictorial material set before our eyes on the newsstands and in the bookshops which threatens to replace the article or the essay or the printed book by the picture caption. If *MAGAZINE OF ART* persists in balancing picture with text, it is out of respect

for the work of art itself. For paradoxically, the work is not self-evident; it arouses, and calls for, discussion. This is said in no narrow educational or academic sense. It is not a question of factual information, either biographical or chronological, nor even of establishing the easily recognizable patterns of recognition and identification. Captions furnish these, and by satisfying simple curiosity tend to send us on, almost without looking, to the next picture, where the process is repeated. The same is true of the *ex cathedra* statement, or that kind of simple judgment of worth, like or dislike, which often passes for criticism. This too is classification, and once we know the niche in which a work belongs, or is said by the writer to belong, we can file it away at its proper level, as we already have in its proper century, and again pass on to satisfy the next doubt.

Discussion of works of art is testimony to the fact that these works carry meanings, and in a day of visual communication this fact needs special emphasis. Even in a news photograph these meanings are not self-evident, while in a work of art they are complicated in structure and allusive in suggestion. They mean different things to different people, and by finding out what it is that they convey to one who has examined them with care and sympathetic insight, we illuminate our own understanding. It is here that "criticism" and "history," so often separated, must join hands—for the setting in which a work is done inevitably enters into its making, though it hardly exhausts it; that the various arts, literary and musical as well as visual, must be brought together; and that the treatment of past and present must merge. All this requires particular stress in a period when abstract art plays a leading role and so much is made of the "abstract" elements of the art of the past. Meanings are just as much present here, though being new meanings they demand new and different kinds of elucidation.

This amounts to saying that the arts are worthy of conscientious attention and passionate discrimination, and that these are expressed in exchanges of critical opinion. The discrimination that goes into their making may be neither verbal nor, in the usual sense, logical. Neither, in the final analysis, is their enjoyment. Yet discussion must be carried on in words, and conscious reasoning had best be logical. At this level different opinions are not right or wrong, but different avenues of approach, and varying value judgments are only a relative protocol within an already select company. The literary arts are recognized as providing such feasts of reason. It is high time that the visual arts were too. R.G.



Roland Penrose

The
PLEASURES
and
MISERIES
of
COLLECTING

A GREAT deal has already been written on how to make and how to preserve a collection. Many rich and distinguished people have spent the greater part of their lives collecting, and not a few have in their generosity bequeathed their treasure to museums and found thereby a means of immortalizing themselves—their names appearing as public benefactors and as promoters of the greatest artists of history. It is difficult to add to this wealth of experience, and anything I shall venture to say can only be reckoned as the ramblings of one who, with very limited means and a disproportionate love of contemporary art, has discovered once again that among the pleasures of acquiring the object of one's desire there is an inevitable counterpart of trouble. This may be due to the fact that the greater the passion with which the collector goes to work, the more he is likely to become involved with his possessions. A sense of responsibility may grow, owing to the labor and sacrifice that their acquisition has meant to him, and he will

lose the detachment and innocent enjoyment with which he began. The more successful he is in finding works of art that are rare and valuable, the more he will worry about their preservation. He may even begin to imagine that he is in some degree their creator, or that the artists who produced them are his adopted children, until a once carefree and admirable pastime becomes a disquieting obsession.

For those collectors whose means have been equal to their ambitions and who have indulged themselves without restraint, collecting has often progressively gained a grip until it has become a major intrigue with a suitable personnel capable of carrying out a long-term operation: experts to advise, architects to create suitable surroundings, restorers to watch for decay

*Pablo Picasso, Green Woman, 1909, oil, 38 x 32",
collection Roland Penrose, London
(formerly collection Paul Eluard)*

or improve on former blunders of their confrères, biographers, historians and critics to prepare monographs and catalogues, detectives for security measures and spies to report on the achievements of rival collectors.

In these terms collecting can amount to an all-consuming passion leading to a state of pathetic grandeur in which the collector finally becomes the prisoner of his own collection, captivated by the magic power and presence of that which he has acquired.

With all his ostentation and obsessions, this type of collector frequently renders great service to the public. His collection, although it may have certain limitations in taste, will have been gathered together with love and respect, and its creator is the antithesis of the speculating collector who may not even want to see his purchases, preferring to leave them in unopened cases in the hope that their value will some day appreciate.

With such diversity in the motives and the results of collecting, there is a fair chance that on examination some light can be thrown on the characters of collectors. The secretive type, for instance, will keep his prints, watercolors, medals and other rare but easily filed treasures carefully hidden away in portfolios and cabinets. The ostentatious type will delight in acres of painted canvas, framed in gold to decorate his palatial walls; whereas the pedant will sneer at anything that is not of academic rarity, regardless of its artistic merit, and the miser will boast above all of the skinflint bargains that each object represents.

Having never seriously considered myself to be a collector, but at the same time finding myself in possession of a considerable number of contemporary works of art, maybe I should explain how this situation came about.

The smell of cedar-lined drawers and the stare of glass-fronted cabinets which contained the paraphernalia of the Victorian collections among which I was brought up gave me a feeling of remoteness and awe. In this array of mummies, coins, walking-sticks, ancient Bibles, atlases and bottles of water from the Dead Sea stored in mothballs and sanctity and dominated by my grandfather's venerable voice booming incessantly "Keep off, dirty paws!" esthetic qualities were forgotten or at least were secondary. I was determined not to be subjugated by an imposing assembly of family treasures, such as Caxton's *Polychronicon*, the largest cairngorm in the world, Sir Isaac Newton's footstool and objects that often had been acquired principally for their rarity, their unusual dimensions or the aura supplied by an anecdote.

The locked cases and the careful arrangements of innumerable curiosities, drawn up like royalty at the saluting base, suggested an inaccessible and sterile world and left me with a sus-

picion that there must be some connection between all tidy arrangements and sterility. Later, this theory was strengthened when I went to Paris in the early 'twenties. I found that among my friends there was no doubt on which side of the fence they preferred to be. For them, tidying up, sweeping, cleaning, dusting and setting things out in an orderly way was always overruled by the more urgent demands of their creative work. Tidiness and its allies were left to the bourgeoisie. My own reaction to my early background was complete. The meticulous magpie attitude of the Victorian collector was to be avoided for ever.

At the same time I found that artists were passionate collectors. Quickness of vision and a lack of prejudice concerning source helped them to pick out objects that were unnoticed by others. Braque, for instance, often searched the dustbins; Max Ernst would add to his collections of exotic butterflies and South Sea Island masks objects such as a box of curiously bent dragon's teeth, which on closer inspection turned out to be samples from temperature tests in a potter's kiln. Picasso, who has probably the largest collection in the world of uncatalogued and uncataloguable objects, some of great rarity and others classifiable to most people as junk, kept beside him the skull of a hippopotamus, *banderillas* and sword from a bull fight, a massive pair of medieval fire-dogs, and an elegant set of neckties bought in London twenty years before and still unused. In his studio this unusual miscellany lay in equal companionship with acquisitions and gifts of paintings by artist friends such as the *Douanier* Rousseau, Matisse and Cézanne.

But between painters' collections and collections of paintings there is a difference, not necessarily of quality but of purpose. The artist examines the window of a junk shop with the same excitement that he has when he wanders over a beach or along a forest path, picking out those things which contain the marvelous surprises needed to stimulate his creative mood. His finds are precious to him for their emotional value and are often otherwise quite worthless. In fact as he looks around he is more conscious of the excitement and satisfaction of finding than the often tedious and frustrating operation of searching, justifying in this way Picasso's remark, "I do not seek, I find."

The collector cannot allow himself this delightful vagrancy. He is bound to limit himself to some definite line in order to give coherence to his collection, and the fields in which he can search profitably are also more limited. He must not hunt the sunburnt slopes of Mont Sainte-Victoire for Cézannes but go directly to the plush-lined salons of the fashionable dealers. His sources are more circumscribed and at the same time present quite different problems. The painter when he brings home his loot is indifferent to those who tell him that it is ugly or forged,



Giorgio de Chirico,
Inquietude of the Poet,
 1913, oil, 42½ x 37",
 collection Roland Penrose
 (formerly collection Paul Eluard)

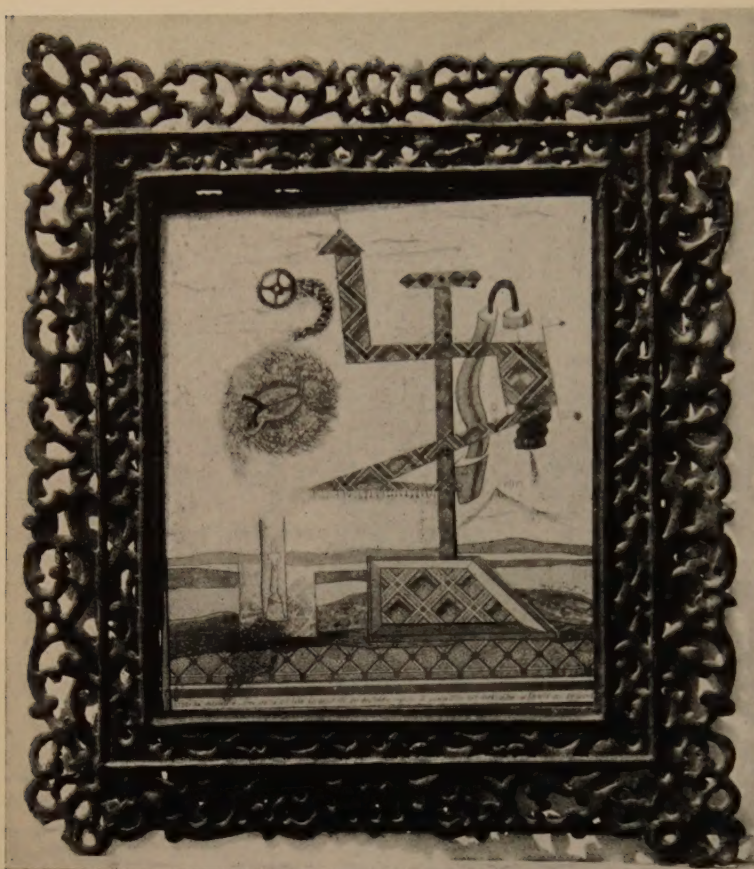
but the collector is bound to be highly sensitive on both these points. His choice, if it is to be worth while, must stand the test of what other connoisseurs are going to say and write about it for many years. The hazards are many, and possibly the most disconcerting thing that may happen is that some carefully chosen piece that has afforded pride and delight for a long time may suddenly be declared to be a fake.

Apart from the obvious misery of wounded prestige and financial loss, there is a psychological change that comes over the owner once an object has been exposed in this way. All that seemed so interesting to him because it revealed some genuine, though perhaps unexpected, intention of the artist will now, stripped of its authenticity, appear crude, uninspired and lifeless. In the light of truth the unhappy victim of falsehood turns away humiliated and disgusted, and the object, however much it may have been a genuine source of inspiration to its owner, has lost its magic and stinks of dishonesty.

But there is more at stake than dishonesty. Our esthetic judgment, whether we like it or not, is influenced by our moral feelings. There are instances when works of art in public museums

have been declared to be fakes and in consequence have been hurriedly removed from the sight of the public who formerly had innocently admired them. At one sweep the object, although in itself unchanged, has been found to be corrupt and worthless. It is also by no means unheard of for this verdict again to be reversed when more reliable evidence has come to light, and for the object to be reinstated in its place of honor. All the time, esthetic judgment is being taken in tow by the moral issue.

An eminent restorer, who knows a great deal about fakes and owns a large quantity, told me that in order to make sure that he was giving them a fair opportunity of impressing him, he often tried hanging them on his walls; but he had never been able to tolerate them for long, however entertaining they may have been at first sight. It seemed to him that their faults and weaknesses became boring owing to their innate lack of sincerity. We may find that this only becomes apparent after the picture has been shown to be false. Formerly the weaknesses could sometimes be enjoyed if they were considered as part of a genuine work and could even fool the spectator into reading into them



Max Ernst, *Katharina ondulata*, 1920, 12½ x 10½", collection Roland Penrose
(formerly collection Paul Eluard)

some deep and difficult purpose. But the only condition that can make a fraudulent work of art palatable, capable of deceiving the wisest of experts and still admirable when its lack of authenticity has been exposed, is that the faker himself is an artist of great sensibility.

The collector who is daring enough to take a risk, and who hopes to discover lost or unknown masterpieces in unconventional places, cannot allow himself to be unduly worried about the possibility of picking up a fake. If he believes in his own judgment and is convinced of the picture's authenticity, his enjoyment of it is likely to continue, whereas if he has doubts he may then indulge in some fascinating detective work to prove the case one way or the other.

I have had the luck to keep out of this kind of trouble chiefly because most of the contemporary painting and sculpture that my wife and I own have been produced by artists alive today, many of whom have been personally known to us for years. As well as being the most unquestionable clue to their authenticity, this has given us an opportunity of understanding something of the background and the process that has led to their creation.

The events that made this possible began with my leaving England in the early 'twenties to live in Paris. I started as a student in the traditional academies of Montparnasse but soon found myself attracted towards that talented and vigorous group of poets and painters who were at that time evolving the new surrealist movement. My first friend among them was Max Ernst. I called on him originally with a view to renting the studio he was vacating in the rue Torlaque and remember vividly a large canvas, hanging high among the rafters, on which was painted a patch of blue. Across the remaining empty space were the words, "*Voici le couleur de mes rêves.*" The unexpected simplicity of this graphic poem made a direct appeal, and I became fascinated as Max introduced me to more of his work, including his newly edited *Histoire naturelle*. This was the beginning of a friendship which I have valued greatly ever since.

My first acquisition, which might have laid the foundation of a conventional collection, was a Gauguin drawing, bought for five pounds before I ever seriously considered going to Paris, but which I sold again a year or so later for ten when I was hard up. But my interest in sur-

realism and the excitement that grew from my friendship with Max Ernst, in whose studio I spent a great deal of time watching him work, often led me to buy paintings and *collages* from him while he was still working on them. The idea of forming a collection in the conventional sense, however, was completely absent. The objects that decorated my rooms, apart from a few canvases bought from friends, were all things that I enjoyed in connection, directly or indirectly, with my work. The surrealists had a very special interest in objects which they divided into categories: found objects, interpreted objects, surrealist objects, etc.—the essential quality shared by them all being that they contained something of the *merveilleux* which stimulated the imagination by its mystery. Among my own objects I remember having a stone from the desert in the form of an eye, the vertebra of a dolphin, a curiously naive model of a ship, various distorting mirrors and a mummified toad—all of no value to anyone but myself. This humble but entertaining way of collecting might have gone on for a long time had not the day arrived when I decided, after thirteen years, to return to England.

The first months after my return were overshadowed by homesickness for the country I had just left and for Paris, where I had made many friends and learned so much. The surrealist group with its central figures, André Breton and Paul Eluard, had provided a fertile atmosphere

in which poets and painters were unusually co-operative. In spite of frequent and tumultuous controversies there was a genuine sense of direction, activated by constant experiments and discoveries. It was a period of optimism not comparable to our present postwar doldrums. Hopes of penetrating mysteries such as the source of poetic inspiration in the light of modern psychology seemed to give serious promise of the birth of new forms of art and of an understanding that would create more vital relationships between art and society.

Maybe it is understandable that my first action on my return should have been to search for some parallel to the climate in which I had lived in Paris. But at this time remarkably little was known about surrealism in London. It was dismissed by most critics as just another crankish and rowdy "ism" connected with politics and the subconscious. But unexpectedly in the autumn of 1935 a small circle of poets and artists, including Herbert Read, Henry Moore, Paul Nash and David Gascoyne, formed themselves into a group with spontaneity and an enthusiasm that delighted me and startled London. Its main activity was the planning of the first International Surrealist Exhibition, which was opened in June, 1936 by Breton and was attended by Eluard and almost every surrealist of importance from abroad.

We had managed to assemble enough pictures and sculpture to give a fair retrospective

André Breton Opening the First International Surrealist Exhibition, London, June, 1936, photograph Bill Brandt; at right, Roland Penrose's *Captain Cook's Last Voyage*





Wall of First International Surrealist Exhibition, London, 1936

view of the development of surrealism from its predecessors, cubism and dada; it stretched from the art of primitive peoples to the work of newcomers such as Delvaux and Humphrey Jennings. In addition the surrealist object in all its various forms, including Meret Oppenheim's fur teacup and Marcel Duchamp's "ready-made" picture, *Pharmacy*, made a sensational appearance. Dali gave his famous lecture from the depths of a diver's suit, while on the walls the pictures and sculptures were interspersed with examples of the art of the insane and specimens of primitive art lent by museums and private collectors. One of the peculiarities of the exhibition was the liveliness of its atmosphere. Although the New Burlington Gallery is among the largest in London, so much material had to be crowded in, and there was such a diversity among the objects, that the conventional ways of hanging in chronological order or in well-balanced groups had to be abandoned for a more appropriate and more surrealist method by which the value of surprise was exploited to its maximum. Exhibits were placed deliberately among unlikely neighbors. Juxtapositions of paintings, drawings, photographs, sculpture, surrealist objects and primitive masks planned on these lines gave an exciting general appearance, while they added to, rather than detracted from, the appeal of any individual exhibit, since it was so unlike those around it. The originality of this system created a contrast with the more sober arrangements of museum curators and art dealers and has, in a modified form, influenced me ever since in hanging my own pictures and planning other exhibitions.

This manifestation, which if it happened now would earn the title of "festival," succeeded in attracting an unusually large number of visitors and provoking volumes of comment, mostly hostile, in the press.

It was at this point that I began to buy a few pictures. The idea that at the end of the exhibition so many should disappear again to their lenders abroad was insufferable. Since I had decided to stay in England, I intended that a few of them should stay with me. Partly through luck and partly because certain collectors, well known for their sound judgment (among them René Gaffé and Paul Eluard), were in a mood for selling, I found myself in possession of surrealist and cubist art of which I have never grown tired.

It was particularly lucky that this opportunity came when it did. If I had put off buying until the present time, I should have found pictures of this kind unobtainable or well beyond my means. But the next problem that arose was to find sufficient space to hang my collection—a problem that I have found increasingly difficult to solve. In fact I have been driven to the belief that they look extremely well hung closely together on my limited wall space, in arrange-

ments that recall the 1936 exhibition.

These ideas apply only to those who love paintings and objects more than interior decoration, and who like to establish a direct intimacy with their collection. There is a danger which comes from arranging works of art in a formal setting with too much perfection, the danger that they will become stale. It often happens that the more you see a thing the less you see it, until finally you become completely insensitive to its presence. Picasso once said as a joke that if you wish to kill a picture you have only to hang it on a nail. To defeat this deadly process the collector should be prepared to make frequent changes in his arrangements and, in spite of the inconvenience that this will cause, he will be rewarded by being able to see his pictures again with new freshness.

Paintings and sculptures considered in this way become part of the life of a household and not mere decorations. Easel pictures, which have been declared by some modern theorists to be an outmoded form of art, are in reality extremely well adapted to this kind of life. Their great advantages are their mobility and the fact that they can be stored in a relatively small space, thus offering a solution to the almost universal problem of insufficient wall space in modern houses. The wise collector, especially if he lives in a city apartment, will make sure that he has sufficient storage space in which to hide away those mistakes that one day or another he is bound to make, and where he can keep those pictures that he loves and knows, so that he will appreciate them all the more when they return to his walls after a short absence.

In addition to this voluntary method of keeping a collection on the move, there is another process which is likely to have the same effect: the loaning of paintings to exhibitions. The present popularity of exhibitions of borrowed pictures and sculpture is due to some extent to the innovations of contemporary art. In this century there has been such activity and invention that neither the public nor the museums that supposedly supply it with education in the arts have been able to keep pace with, much less digest, the revolutionary changes that have occurred. Partly in response to public demand, partly as propaganda for their own national art, and partly to attract tourists, many governments have, since the war, been spending a great deal of money and energy in organizing loan exhibitions. This entails constant appeals to collectors of modern paintings, who receive these requests for loans with varying degrees of enthusiasm. Some strongly resent the inconvenience that this is likely to cause, the empty spaces that are left on their walls with nothing but the dusty outline of the departed frame, the annoyance of un-hanging and rehanging and the possibility of the object being damaged. I have known of a case



Paul Delvaux, *Call of the Night*, 1937, oil, 44 x 52", collection Roland Penrose

in which a large early painting by Chagall was refused to an exhibition on the grounds that if it were seen in public again, its value would deteriorate. The organizer could defeat this objection only by the outright purchase of the picture, and having taken this risk he claims never to have regretted it; however, this is an expensive way of completing an exhibition, and one which he is not likely to repeat.

In general it seems that collectors are generous lenders, content to know that they are giving pleasure to others and possibly knowing that their possessions are not likely to sink in value as they become more widely known; but whatever else may result there is always the chance that absence will breed endearment, and the return of the picture will reawaken more acute delights.

Loan exhibitions are one of the least damaging inventions of our times. It is only recently that finance regulations, export and import quotas, customs barriers and measures to prevent the drain of modern masterpieces from Europe have ceased to make collecting the simple pleasure that it was before the war. In many countries it has become virtually impossible for the layman to buy a work of art from abroad. This uncivilized state of affairs frustrates not only the collector but also the artist, as it makes his

means of living even more precarious. These national barriers are damaging to the healthy development of the arts, which should be able to rely on free international exchange. As art and economics cannot be divorced, there is little hope of a great resurgence of the arts until a more favorable situation can be evolved. Meanwhile the loan exhibitions that decorate our official museums are a substitute for what should be a common international heritage.

For those who wish to enjoy the pleasures of collecting, and who realize that it is an occupation to which there is no end, there is still an enormous field for activity. A collection gives most satisfaction when it is thought of as something that is fluid and changing. To prevent congestion and stalemate, a collector should always be seeking to improve his collection by a careful culling of minor pieces; but here again he is likely to have difficulty. The good pieces sell easily and become increasingly difficult to find, while the indifferent and bad stay with him. There is, however, one infallible method of coping with this progressive road to ruin, which is to sell everything—good, bad and indifferent—and then start all over again. This system of the periodical purge is drastic but extremely good for the spiritual, mental and physical health of the collector.

José
Clemente
Orozco



FRAGMENTS OF AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Note: By kind permission of Sra. Orozco we print here excerpts from an incomplete autobiography published serially in the original Spanish in the Mexican daily *Excelsior* (Feb. 17-April 8, 1942) and issued in book form in 1945 by the Ediciones Occidente. The English translation is by Frances Leslie of Mills College.

❖ A major exhibition of Orozco's work, organized by the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, will be on view jointly at the Institute and at the Fogg Museum of Art from Dec. 3 to Jan. 11, 1953. Thereafter, it will travel on the following schedule: Art Gallery of Toronto, Jan. 20-Mar. 1; Delaware Art Center, Wilmington, Mar. 15-Apr. 5; Detroit Institute of Arts, Apr. 20-May 25; Municipal Art Commission of Los Angeles, June 15-July 27; San Francisco Museum of Art, Aug. 10-Sept. 13; Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Sept. 29-Oct. 25; Cleveland Museum of Art, Nov. 10-Dec. 15.

I was born on November 23rd, 1883, in Ciudad Guzmán, known also as Zapotlán el Grande, in the state of Jalisco. My family left Ciudad Guzmán when I was two years old, staying in Guadalajara for some time and later moving to Mexico City, about 1890. In that same year I entered as a student in the Escuela Primaria Anexa a la Normal de Maestros. . . .

On the same street, and a few steps from the school, Vanegas Arroyo had his printing shop where José Guadalupe Posada worked on his famous engravings. It is well known that Vanegas Arroyo was publisher of many extraordinary popular publications, ranging from stories for children to the *corridos* which were something like the journalistic "extras" of the time, and Posada illustrated all these publications with engravings that have been very much imitated but never equaled to this day.

The newsboys went through the streets and plazas shouting loudly the sensational news that came from the presses of Vanegas Arroyo: "The Shooting of Captain Cota" or "The Horrible Crime of the Horrible Son that Killed His Horrible Mother."

Posada worked in full view of the public behind a large window that faced the street, and I stopped four times a day, going to and from school, enchanted for a few minutes watching the engraver at work; and sometimes I dared to enter the shop to snatch a few of the shavings of metal that came from the scratchings of the master's burin as he worked on the print plate painted with red lead.

Above: Self-Portrait, 1940, tempera, 20 1/4 x 23 3/4",
Museum of Modern Art



Woman, 1910-13, pencil,
collection Dr. Alvar Carrillo Gil,
Mexico, D. F.

This was the first stimulus that awoke my imagination and caused me to scribble on paper my first figures, the first revelation to me of the existence of the art of painting. From this time on I was one of the best customers of the publications of Vanegas Arroyo, whose sales-shop was located in a house (on the corner of Guatemala and República Argentina Streets) that was later wrecked when archeological ruins were found below its foundations. In the same sales-shop, engravings of Posada were colored by hand with stencils, and from observing this operation I received my first lessons in coloring. . . .

In the classes of young apprentices of painting [which I later attended at the Academia], there appeared the first revolutionary outbreak in the field of Mexican art. In former times the Mexican had been a poor colonial servant, incapable of creating anything or thinking for himself; everything had to come already formed from the European mother-country, for we were an inferior and degenerate race. We were permitted to paint, but it had to be as they painted in Paris, and it was the Parisian critics who were to judge our work and to give their final verdict. Our architecture became a rehash of French chalets and châteaux. All the sculptures and marbles of public and private buildings came from Italy. . . .

In those night-school classes where we heard the enthusiastic voice of Dr. Atl, the agitator, we began to suspect that this whole colonial situation was a plot of international businessmen; that we did, after all, have a person-

ality that was worth as much as any other. We should study the old masters and foreign ones, but we could do as well or better than they. We must have, not excessive pride, but confidence in ourselves, a consciousness of our own being and our own destiny.

It was then that the painters became fully aware of the country in which they lived. Saturnino Herrán now painted the creole types he knew, rather than *manolas* in the manner of Zuloaga. Dr. Atl went to live in Popocatepetl, and I went out to explore the worst districts of Mexico City. On all canvases there began to appear, like the dawn, the Mexican landscape and all the forms and colors so familiar to us. The first, still timid step towards liberation from foreign tyranny, yet without neglecting thorough preparation and rigorous training. . . .

In order to celebrate the first centenary of the *Grito de Dolores* in 1910, the government sponsored some great festivities, one of which was a huge exposition of contemporary Spanish painting, with expenses paid by the Mexican government. The cost of the show apparently was between twenty and twenty-five thousand pesos, not including a costly pavilion especially constructed for the exhibit on Avenida Juárez in front of the Hotel Regis. . . .

But we protested to the Department of Education: the Spanish exhibition was fine, but would nothing be conceded to us Mexicans whose independence was the motive for the celebration? Dr. Atl in his position as leader then pulled some strings, and as a result we were granted three thousand pesos for a collective exhibit in the Academia. Our group consisted of some fifty painters and ten sculptors. We decided to name as treasurer of this ridiculous amount the lawyer Joaquín Clausel, also a painter, and we divided the money in portions of fifty and one hundred pesos, with each artist obliged to present two paintings, sketches, sculptures or engravings recently executed and not previously exhibited or published, besides other works. There was no jury for the final acceptance, but each work was held up and the crowd accepted it or rejected it by acclamation, and many works were rejected with whistling, as this was not a society of mutual praise.

The exposition had a tremendous success, which was completely unexpected. The Spanish show was more polished and formal, but ours, in spite of being improvised on the spur of the moment, was more dynamic, more varied, more ambitious and without pretension. It occupied the entire patio, the corridors and every available room of the Academia. Mexico has never since seen such an exhibition. . . .

The adventure did not end there. Inspired by its success, we accepted a proposal of Dr. Atl, which was to organize immediately a

society that we called the "*Centro Artístico*," whose sole end was to persuade the government to give us walls to paint on in public buildings. At last our supreme ambition would be realized! We rented a room on the second floor of a house on Monte de Piedad Street, and we celebrated the birth of our organization noisily with some marvelous Italian macaroni, cooked by Dr. Atl in empty oil tins, and with rivers of beer donated by a bar in return for some advertising posters.

We asked the Department of Education to allow us to decorate the walls of the amphitheater of the Preparatory School, recently constructed. Our request was granted, and we divided the panels and erected scaffolds.

The great exposition of Mexican painting had taken place in September of 1910. We began to make preparations for the mural paintings the following November. On the twentieth of that month, however, the Revolution broke out. There was panic, and our plans were ruined or postponed.

We all know what happened upon the triumph of the Maderist revolt, and how that régime became the government. One of the newspapers of the opposition was one of the many "sons" born to that old *Ahuizote* [i.e., Madero; the word, signifying an insufferable person, derives from the name of the ruthless Aztec king Alhuizotl]. The particular one I am speaking of was directed by Miguel Ordorica, today director of *Últimas Noticias*. I was presented to him by a friend of mine, the reporter Joaquín Piña, and I began to work as cartoonist. It was then that I found out how a political newspaper was run. The editors met with the director and discussed heatedly the daily public events, and the discussions

offered sufficient light for pertinent articles and cartoons. The scapegoats, naturally, were political personages of the first rank.

Jesús Luján, a friend of Ruelas', bought the original of one of the drawings I did for one hundred pesos. It was a bloody caricature of the top staff of Maderists: Sánchez Azcona, Querido Moheno, Bonilla, Gustavo Madero, Zapata, Jesús Urueta, etc.

Instead of working for an opposition newspaper, I might have joined the staff of a government one, and then the scapegoats would have been on the other side. Artists have not, nor have they ever had, "political convictions" of any kind, and those who think they have such convictions are not artists. . . .

I took no part in the Revolution: nothing happened to me; there was no danger to me of any kind. For me the Revolution was one of the most gay and diverting of carnivals—that is to say, it was like what they say carnivals are like, for I had never seen one. I knew the great leaders only by sight, from the times when they paraded down the streets in front of their troops, followed by their general staff. For this reason the numerous articles that appeared in American newspapers about my warlike deeds amused me greatly. The headlines of one San Francisco daily called me: "The Barefoot Soldier of the Revolution"; another related in minute detail my differences with Carranza, who persecuted me on account of my attacks; another dramatized the loss of my left hand while throwing bombs in a terrible battle between Villistas and Zapatistas, when in reality I lost it when I was very young playing with powder—an ordinary accident. There

Combat, 1920, oil, 26½ x 35¾", collection Dr. Alvar Carrillo Gil, Mexico, D. F.





Death, 1922, oil, 22 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 27 $\frac{1}{2}$, collection Dr. Alvar Carrillo Gil, Mexico, D. F.

were other papers which made me a standard-bearer of the indigenous cause and showed a picture of me as a Tarahumara Indian. I never worried about the indigenous cause, nor did I throw bombs, nor did they shoot me three times, as another paper asserted.

The "Tragic Ten Days" that many called "magic" was really a terrible thing, but I was not in the citadel or near it. . . .

In 1922 the era of mural painting began in Mexico. But before speaking of that, one should examine the ideas that prevailed at the moment when the new pictorial period commenced. We shall mention first its infantilism.

The primitive impressionist schools that were still functioning had undergone a radical change. They no longer merely attempted to imitate French impressionists, to paint out in the fields the light of the sun or the sun itself, the atmosphere and the hour, forgetting the objects in order to capture their reflections in the water. The "democratic" idea appeared, a type of very rare artistic Christianity and a beginning of nationalism. The students were also very different. Instead of art students, all kinds of people arrived, from school children and truants to clerks and young ladies and country folk, young and old. There was no preparation. Colors, brushes and canvas were immediately put into their hands, and they were told to paint in any way that they liked what they saw before them—landscapes, fruits, figures or objects. The results were simply marvelous, stupendous, colossal! There were not adjectives eloquent enough to

describe the works. Previous knowledge of geometry, perspective, anatomy, theory of color or history were academic things which disturbed the free expression of the genius of the race, whatever that was. The professor had nothing to teach his students: on the contrary, they were the ones who were to teach the professor. The candor and innocence of the children and artless common people were sacred and must not be ruined with technical observations; and the pupil must be stimulated only by a litany of compliments and exclamations of surprise, like the "olés" shouted at a specially fine feat in the bull ring by Armillita. The merit of the works was even greater if the pupil was illiterate, because his soul would be virgin, unpolluted, free from all contamination and all prejudice. If he reasoned only a little, his work would be ruined because it would no longer be innocent and spontaneous. Blessed be the ignorant and the imbeciles, for theirs is the supreme glory of art! Blessed be the idiots and the cretins, for from their hands will come the masterpieces of painting! . . .

Mural painting found the table set in 1922. The very idea of painting walls and all the ideas that were going to constitute the new artistic trend and give it life already existed in Mexico, and they developed and were defined between 1900 and 1920. Naturally those ideas had their origins in previous centuries, but during these two decades they acquired their definitive form. We all know well that no historic event occurs isolated and without a reason.

A résumé can be made of what was thought in Mexico in 1920 in reference to art:

1. Those were the days when it was believed that anyone could paint and that the merit of his works would increase in proportion to the ignorance and stupidity of the artists.

2. Many believed that pre-Cortesian art was the real tradition in which we belonged, and people began to speak of the "renaissance of indigenous art."

3. The furor for the clay modeling of the present-day indigenes was reaching its height. That was when Mexico began to be inundated by straw mats, clay jars, *huaraches*, Chalman dancers, *sarapes*, *rebozos*, and exportation of all these goods was initiated on a great scale. Cuernavaca and Taxco were beginning to reach their apogee as tourist attractions.

4. Popular art of all types was appearing, with an abundance of creations in painting and sculpture, in the field of the theater, of music and literature.

5. High-pitched nationalism was making its appearance. Now Mexican artists considered themselves equal or superior to foreigners. The themes for their works must of necessity be Mexican.

6. The labor movement was becoming important: "Art to serve the laborers." It was thought that art must be essentially a weapon in social conflicts.

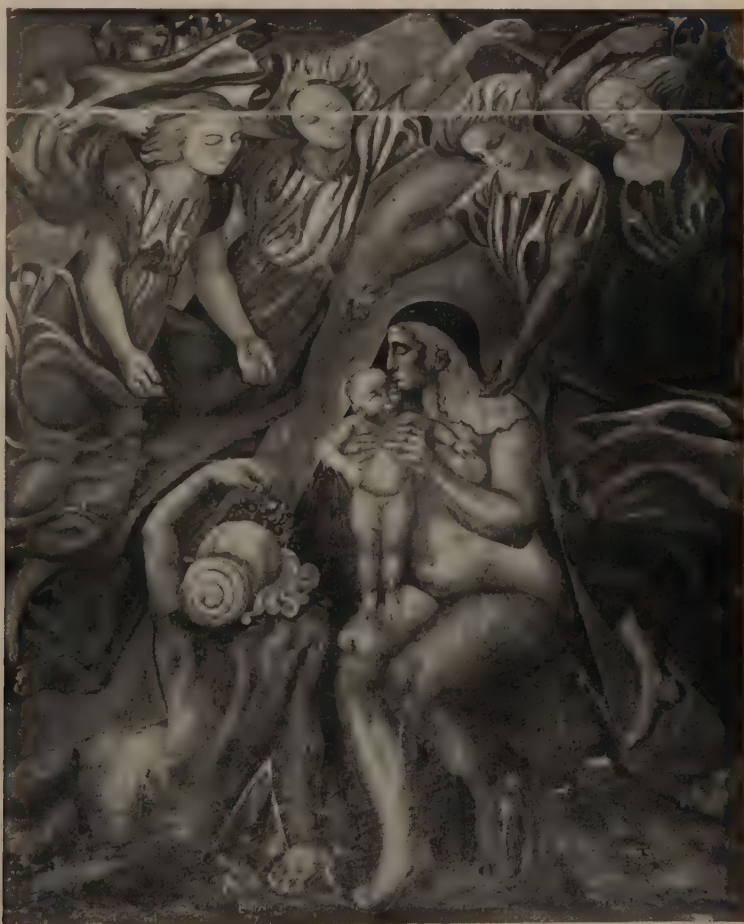
7. The attitude of Dr. Atl had by now become a school, intervening directly and actively in militant politics.

8. Artists became enthusiastic about sociology and history. . . .

What differentiated the group of mural painters from any other like group was their critical ability. Because of the preparation most of them had, they were able to see with considerable clarity the problem of the moment and what path should be followed. They were completely aware of the historical moment in which they were living and of the relationship of their art to the world and to existing society. By a happy coincidence, a group of experienced artists and revolutionary political officials, who understood the part they were called on to play, joined in the same field of action. The chief of these was Don José Vasconcelos. . . .

The technical and esthetic methods that mural painters used in 1922 can be classified into two groups: first, those that came from Italy, and

Fresco for National Preparatory School,
Mexico, D. F., 1923,
photograph © Bernard G. Silberstein,
Cincinnati





The Subway, 1928, oil, 16 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 22 $\frac{1}{8}$ ", Museum of Modern Art

second, those from Paris. Not one painter of that time or now has ever attempted to paint in the manner of the Mayans, Toltecs, Chinese or Polynesians. It is painting coming either from the Mediterranean, or in the manner and style of the Paris that existed before this "totalitarian" war, which it seems will never again exist. . . .

Mural painting was initiated under very good auspices. Even the errors that were committed were useful. It broke the routine into which painting had fallen. It did away with many prejudices, and it was useful for seeing social problems from new points of view. It liquidated a whole epoch of brutifying bohemianism, of daubers who lived a life of sloth in their "ivory towers," infectious dives, in bondage to alcoholism, with a guitar in their arms, affecting an absurd idealism—beggars in an already decaying society about to disappear.

The new painters and sculptors would be men of action, strong, healthy and educated, ready to work like good laborers eight or ten hours a day. They entered the workshops, universities, barracks and schools, avid to know and understand everything and to occupy as soon as possible their place in the creation of a new world. They dressed in overalls and climbed their scaffolds. . . .

Repudiation of easel painting never did take place. It was found to be unreasonable, because such work was not opposed to mural painting but merely different, and it was as useful as the other to the people and the workers. It was then called "mobile painting," but it was the same as before. Not only mobile paintings

but even small engravings were considered very necessary in order to provide the home of every worker with an object of art. It was also realized that not all painters had an aptitude for mural painting, since their talents might be more applicable to small paintings.

To condemn easel painting because it was aristocratic would be to condemn a great part of the art of the ages. The Rembrandts, Titians and El Grecos would have to be burned.

By this means we arrived at proletarian art, the legitimate son of the manifesto of the Union of Painters and Sculptors. Proletarian art consisted of paintings representing laborers at work and were supposedly destined for the workers. But that was a mistake, for a laborer who works eight hours in a shop is not pleased to find paintings of "laborers at work" in his house when he comes home. He would rather see something different, which has nothing to do with work and is restful. But the most amusing thing was that proletarian art was bought by the bourgeoisie against whom it was supposed to be directed, at very good prices, and the proletarians would have bought with great pleasure bourgeois art, if they had had money to do so. Not having it, they delighted in stocking up on calendar illustrations showing aristocratic ladies indolently reclining on bear skins or elegant gentlemen kissing marchionesses in the moonlight on castle terraces. The parlors of the bourgeois homes were full of proletarian objects such as *petates*, straw-woven chairs, clay jars and tin-plate candlesticks; while a worker, as soon as he had enough money to furnish his house, bought a "pullman" covered with thick velvet, a breakfast table or a set of

furniture made of those strange nickel-plated tubes, thick crystals and beveled mirrors.

The shoe factories of León and Guadalajara produce tremendous quantities of *huaraches* for the bourgeoisie of the United States, while our ungainly girls long for high heels and silk stockings. Madero Avenue and Juárez Avenue are full of shops with proletarian objects. In order to buy silk cloth, one must go to Lagunilla.

The truth is that good taste is not always innate nor the exclusive patrimony of any certain race or social class. Only education can create it, orient it or purify it.

In the period of acute enthusiasm for the indigenous, the Indian was identified with the proletarian without bearing in mind that not all Indians are proletarians and not all proletarians are Indians; and then came the Indian-proletarian paintings, also sons of the manifesto of the Union. All those paintings went to the United States into the hands of the white race. Neither the Indians in Mexico nor those in the States ever had the slightest knowledge of the existence of those paintings that exalted their race. In America it was believed that the Mexican painters were tremendously popular among the indigenous masses, just as Zapata would have been; but even Zapata can be absolutely unknown among the Indians of Durango or Quintana Roo. . . .

In order to do away with "bourgeois individualism," Siqueiros and Xavier Guerrero thought up the "teams" or groups of painters who worked in common on one painting, dividing up the work according to their talents and following a preconceived plan. Even before the team idea, it had been agreed that no member of the Union would sign his murals, considering them products of the master and his assistants, subject to the criticism of all the painters. This plan failed because no one would conform to the rule.

Later the teams really functioned, but not enough to know for certain what results could be achieved. It is possible that in certain cases collective work on a single painting or sculpture might be indispensable. The result would be very different from that produced by individual effort. But this latter cannot entirely disappear, as the manifesto seemed to intend.

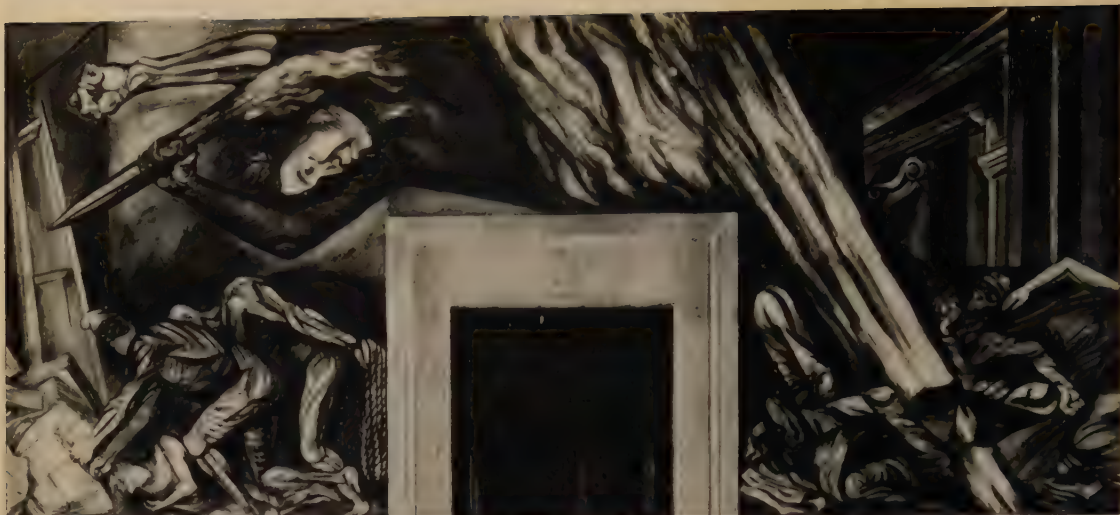
Another interpretation of the same idea is that the artist executes his works taking into account the group or society of which he is a part, and not to give pleasure to only one or a few individuals. But here also confusion results. Art interests everyone, and unfortunately non-art interests equally and sometimes even more. The world is full to bursting of vulgarities known and liked by millions of people in all countries of the earth. The worst movies are the ones that last longest at the box-office. . . .

The whole history of Mexico seems to be written exclusively from a racial standpoint. Dis-

cussion reduces itself apparently to proclaiming the superiority of one of the two races; and the worst of it is that it is not a domestic discussion, because foreign pens have intervened and continue to intervene in the shaping of our history, with very mischievous ends. The work of our historians seems to be a sort of boxing match between Indianists and Hispanists, with foreigners as referees. . . .

To achieve unity, peace and progress it would perhaps be enough to end the racial question forever. Never again to speak of Indians, Spaniards and *mestizos*. Relegate to purely speculative studies the discussion of the Conquest and place it back in the era in which it belongs—which is none other than the sixteenth century. Treat the Indian not as an "Indian" but as a man, equal to other men, as we treat Andalusians or Basques. If there is a Department of Indian Affairs, why not one for Mestizo or Creole Affairs? . . . A department for vicious characters or for the sick would be less humiliating. The indigenous races would be only one more in the sum of races that form the Hispanic peoples, in the same category and with the same rights as any of them. . . . There would no longer be need to speak of the lion and her cubs, or the mother and her children. We would all be the lions and all part of Mother Spain, from Catalonia to Peru, from Chihuahua to Patagonia. The mother country could be anywhere in the world where Hispanic people live their lives, no matter what they think or what they love.

But this lovely panorama will be spoiled by the indigenists. According to them, the conquest should not have been as it was. Instead of sending cruel and ambitious captains, Spain should have sent large delegations of ethnologists, anthropologists, archeologists, civil engineers, dental surgeons, veterinarians, doctors, rural school teachers, agronomists, Red Cross nurses, philosophers, philologists, biologists, art critics, mural painters and historical scholars. Upon arrival at Veracruz, flower-decked allegorical vehicles should have been unloaded from the caravels. In one of them Cortés and his captains, each carrying little baskets of lilies and great quantities of flowers, confetti and serpentine for the road to Tlaxcala and the great Tenochtitlán, after having rendered full homage to the powerful Montezuma should have established laboratories of bacteriology, urology, X-ray, ultra-violet lights, a Department of Public Welfare, universities, kindergartens, libraries and banks. Instead of accepting the frequent gifts made to them of Aztec and Toltec maidens, the Spaniards should have brought beautiful girls from Andalusia and Galicia to offer to Montezuma and Cuauhtémoc. They should have put Alvarado, Ordaz, Sandoval and other strong men on guard over the ruins, so that none of the great pre-Cortesian art would be lost. They should have learned the seven hun-



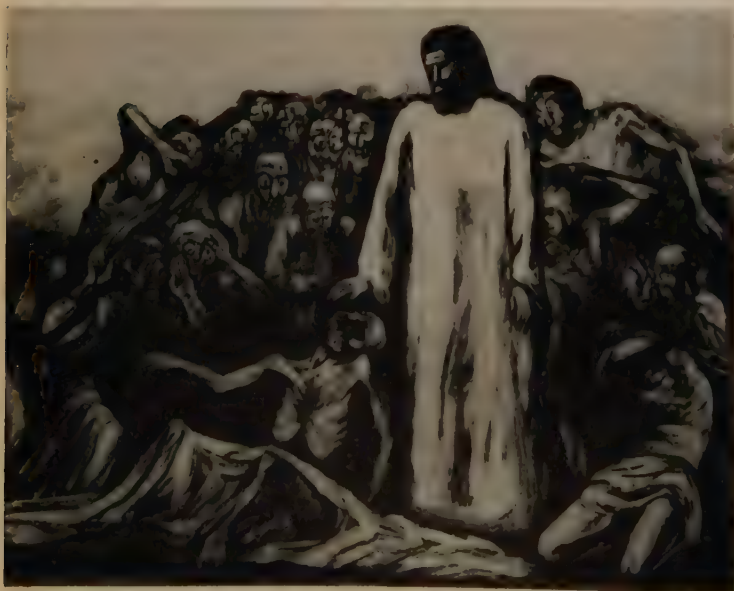
Fresco for Supreme Court, Mexico, D. F., 1941, photograph Luis Marquez, Mexico, D. F.

dred eighty-two different languages which were spoken here. They should have respected the indigenous religion and left Huitzilopochtli in his place. They should have distributed seed, agricultural machinery and livestock, free. They should have constructed houses to give to the Indians. They should have organized public lands and cooperatives. They should have constructed bridges and roads. They should have taught the Indians new industries and sports, all in a nice way, affectionately and understandingly. They should have encouraged human sacrifices and founded a large packing house for human flesh, with a fattening department and modern refrigerating and canning machinery. They should have suggested very respectfully to Montezuma that he establish democracy in the country while still conserving the privileges of the aris-

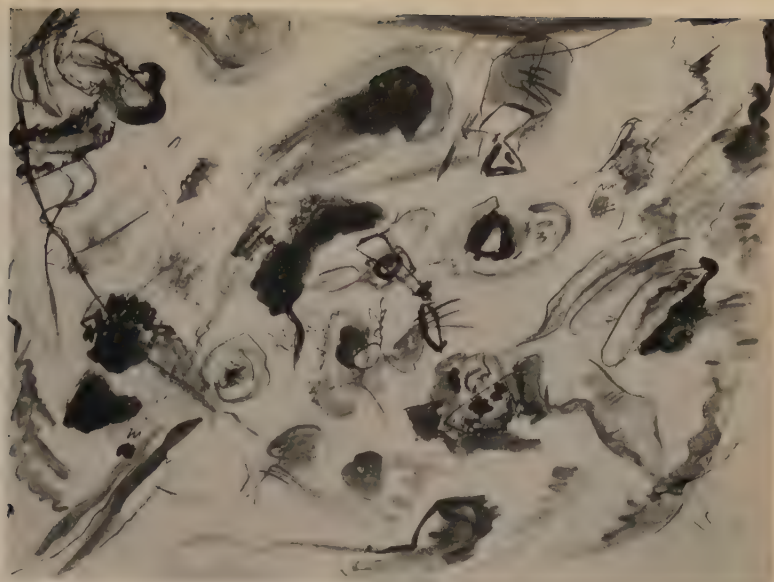
tocracy to make everyone happy.

In that way three centuries of the hated Colony would have been saved, and the great Teocalli would still be standing, well disinfected so that the blood of the sacrificed victims would not putrefy, and blood pudding could be made with it in the factory that would occupy the site that unfortunately is now occupied by the Monte de Piedad.

It would have been so lovely if, at the huge banquet with which the newspaper *Vida Nacional* celebrated its silver anniversary, everyone had come in a loincloth and feathers, with a wooden saber; and the din that prevented anyone from hearing the speakers had been the mixture of the one thousand three hundred twenty indigenous languages. Of course, the newspaper *Excelsior* would be written in Chichimecan!



Raising of Lazarus, 1942, oil, 21 x 29", collection Sra. Orozco, Mexico, D. F.



KANDINSKY'S METHOD *and* CONTEMPORARY CRITICISM

Kenneth C. Lindsay

THE paintings of the younger American abstract expressionists seem to be a focal point of the present-day critical dilemma. Frequently unpremeditated in immediate execution, eminently subjective, and still sufficiently new to have resisted the unmasking of their formal secrets, these paintings have given rise to very real problems. An ever-growing art public, not realizing the difference between the quick and easy dissemination of art news and the slow follow-up of understanding, frets in bewilderment. A few, not able to bear being duped, will turn to the critic for guidance.

The critic, however, is in an even less attractive quandary. He knows that the apparent ease of non-objective or other abstract painting has attracted a host of camp followers eager for

quick success. Though it is obvious that all non-objective paintings cannot be first-rate, the critic evaluating these paintings is inhibited by the dismal record of failures in judgment made by his predecessors during the past hundred years. Then, too, the sharpness of the critical blade has been dulled by the catholicity of taste that is an essential part of our age. A critic trained to understand and appreciate the art of the Polyynesians, of primitives and children, of the Byzantines, Chinese, Scythians and others, is hardly left with sufficient prejudice—or time—to disentangle the artistic growth sprouting up and growing all about him. His hard-come-by critical

Above: First non-objective watercolor, 1910, 19½ x.25½", collection Mme. Nina Kandinsky, Paris, photograph Marc Vaux

equipment is limited to the past and the modified continuance of the past into the present. He cannot fully understand the future as it is being revealed to us by creative artists, nor the techniques and disciplines of these revelations. The only people dead certain about our art in the making are the hide-bound traditionalists. But their damnation of the modern is no longer interesting or even revealing in the negative sense, since their appeal is so often through the funny-bone. The renaissance vintage that they imbibe with such swagger must have been diluted or turned sour, because it has only made them a little silly.

Perhaps a study of the pioneer of non-objective painting, Wassily Kandinsky, will help to resolve this dilemma. Since the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston has initiated a major Kandinsky exhibition, which is now traveling to key points in the country, the public and critics will have the opportunity to view many of the works of an established master of the new idiom. The works that the Institute has imported from abroad for the occasion, and those owned in this country, when seen together, should help us to understand a few of the ways and means of the art of this man who is at least behind us in time.

Kandinsky is a good illustration of the type of artist who disturbed the public, confounded the critic and insulted the heady traditionalist. A neo-romantic, he disapproved of giving youth impeccable recipes, suggesting rather an education in the synthetic sense wherein the student should hear "the music of the spheres." This music, the directing voice of the subconscious, must be listened to, be it just or false. But if it be indistinct, "the artist should put down his brush and wait." Although he countenanced thought about art, yet he believed that, while painting, the reason should sleep. A kind of Crocean "lyrical intuition" would carry the artist on, and all problems would be solved more or less automatically by his "law of inner necessity." This law was simply Kandinsky's law unto himself. Any artist who creates a completely new tradition without the comfort of older traditions upon which to lean is familiar with such a law. But it is always difficult for the outsider to understand the burden and loneliness of the "total freedom" which gives rise to the need for this great and terrible law of self.

It is not surprising that Kandinsky drew most frequently upon his past works during his *Blaue Reiter* period (c. 1908-18). The turbulence of total revolution—which this period meant for him and for the history of art—did not in general encourage finish. Though he painted his first completely non-objective watercolor in 1910, objective elements continued to make their appearance as late as 1918 in the increasingly purified abstract web of tensions. The battle for this purification, together with the dis-

ruption implicit in the destruction of his knowledge of traditional painting, explains to a large degree the overwhelming vigor of the early works.

Quite obviously Kandinsky drew upon the 1910 watercolor for the *Composition 7* of 1913. But before this limpid little aquarelle was transformed into the monumental grandeur of the large composition, a complex technical and spiritual struggle took place. There are, all told, six oil studies for *Composition 7*. The one in the Museum of Modern Art, called *Fragment No. 1*, is the second study. It is a gloomy and foreboding piece, not altogether pleasing. The third study, now in the Albright Art Gallery, though farther from the final conception, shows a loosening of the abruptness of the forms and an ever closer relating of them to the 1910 watercolor. Surely we have here in this partial description of slow germination of *Composition 7* an illustration of what Kandinsky meant by a "composition": "An expression of a slowly formed inner feeling, tested and worked over repeatedly and almost pedantically."

Mention should be made in passing of the hallucinatory face which can be found in both of the study pieces. It is easier to locate in the black-and-white reproduction than in the original. Faces such as these delight the surrealist and challenge the psychologist. We know from the evidence of the singular *Glass Painting* of 1912 that Kandinsky once used real faces peering out from the phantasmagoria. But these were intentional, whereas the faces of the study pieces are accidental. To hunt for them is an irrelevant game—one which can be played with most art.

In the genesis of *Composition 7* we see two methods of painting in operation: constant revision of a motive in the search for a final form, and the employment of an earlier work as the germ for a new creation. Both methods were used often during the *Blaue Reiter* period, infrequently during the *Bauhaus* period (c. 1918-33), and hardly at all during the Parisian epoch (c. 1933-44). Since these two methods characterize one who is searching and struggling, presumably Kandinsky in his two later periods had acquired greater mastery and self-sufficiency.

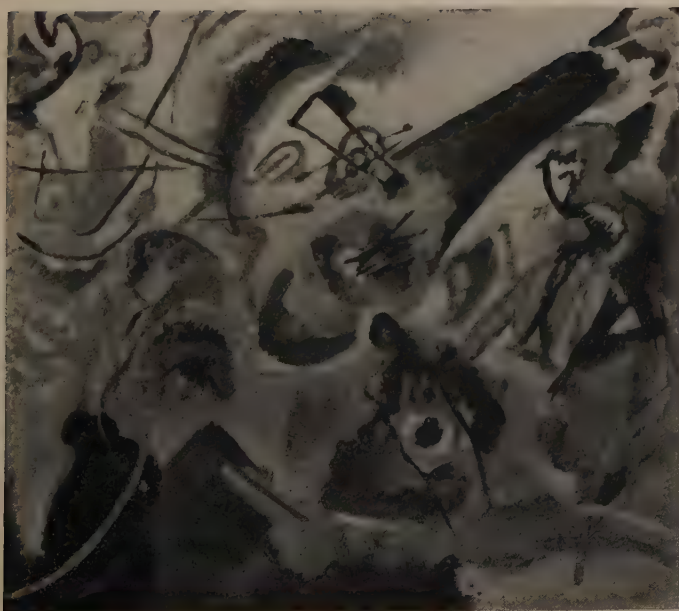
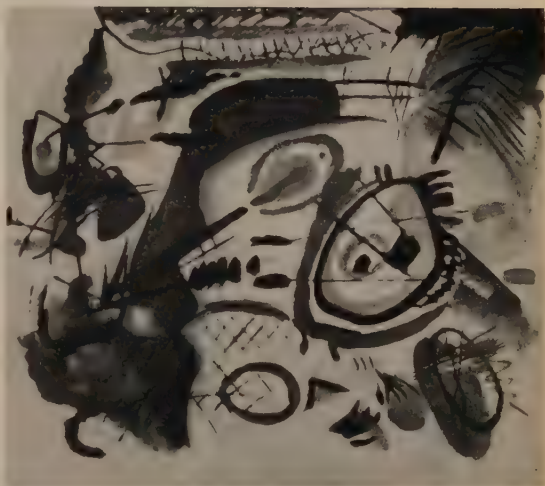
The function that drawing served for Kandinsky is a revealing study in itself and amplifies our understanding of the two methods of work just described. The *Blaue Reiter* period was one of unbridled extrovert colorism. It saw the writing of *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*, a book that dealt chiefly with color. The drawings of this period were painterly in nature and dedicated to the statement and revision of motives for his paintings, giving evidence of theoretical, technical and stylistic consistency and integration.

A qualitative and quantitative change in the drawings took place during the *Bauhaus* period. The nineteen-twenties witnessed Kandinsky's greatest drawing productivity and the pub-



Composition 7, 1913, oil, owned by the USSR
(from Grohmann, Kandinsky, Paris, 1930)

Composition 7, Fragment 1, 1913, oil, $34\frac{7}{8} \times 39\frac{5}{8}$ ",
Museum of Modern Art



Composition 7, Fragment 2, 1913, oil, $34\frac{1}{2} \times 39\frac{1}{4}$ ",
Room of Contemporary Art, Albright Art Gallery



Watercolor, 1919, 9 1/2 x 12 1/2", collection Mme. Nina Kandinsky, Paris

lication of *Point and Line to Plane*, a book that dealt primarily with the graphic elements of art. Drawings were now made as works of art in themselves, seldom as preparations for paintings. His drawings were exhibited by themselves for the first time in 1931.

The two watercolors of 1919 and 1920 show how the change to the linear was gathering momentum before Kandinsky actually came to the *Bauhaus* in 1922. At the same time they illustrate a third method of painting, one which can be called "revision due to change in stylistic conception." The forms in the 1919 version still

retain some of the vigor of the *Blaue Reiter* period. But within the new spatial framework of the green foreground band and the distant plane in the background, this old vigor seems aimless. The authentic *Blaue Reiter* tensions were a turmoil, as we can see in *Composition 7*. They created their own plane, making it heave and billow, and giving only passing attention to the boundary of the frame. During the years 1915-16 these tensions slackened, and the poignant cold yellows of the wartime watercolors are an expressive characteristic of this transformation. They give mute evidence of some-

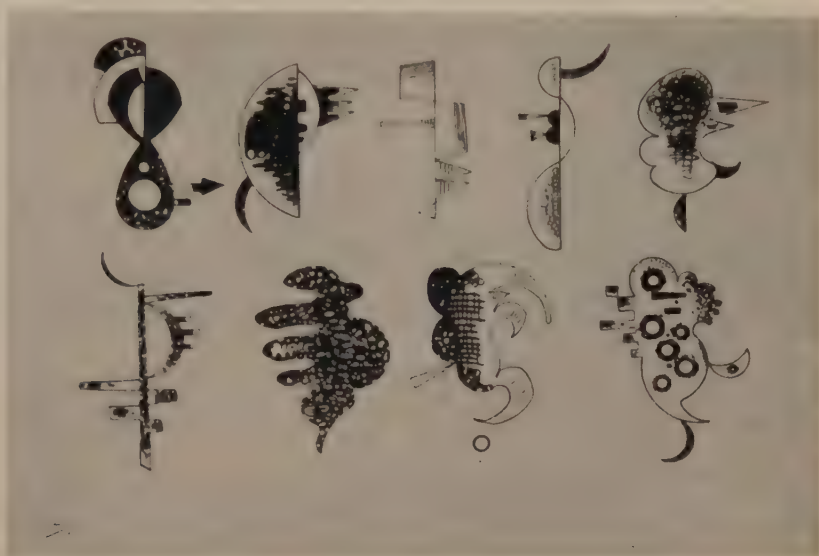
Preparatory sketch for "Juryless" mural, 1922, detail, collection Mme. Nina Kandinsky, Paris



thing that was dying not only for Kandinsky but for the entire world: the optimism of the nineteenth century. This sense of decay did not make him despair like the dadaists in Zurich, nor seek comfort in a neo-classicism like some members of the cubist-futurist generation; instead it metamorphosed his style in terms of the introvert precision of the 'twenties. In the watercolor of 1920, the aimlessness and lack of center and "snap" of the earlier work were corrected in

compliance with the new plane structure.

Most critics do not prefer Kandinsky's paintings of the *Bauhaus* period. They find these works cold, especially in comparison to the obvious fervor of the *Blaue Reiter* works. If this judgment were the result of a searching visual experience, no protest would be called for. But often these reactions are rather the result of a predisposition, prepared by criticism, to find cold lack of expression. Let us look for a moment



Every Man for Himself, 1934, ink drawing, collection Mme. Nina Kandinsky, Paris

Every Man for Himself, 1934, oil, 23½ x 27½", collection Mme. Nina Kandinsky, Paris





Unfolding, 1943, oil, 14½ x 22½", collection Mme. Nina Kandinsky, Paris

at the detail of the preparatory sketch of the 1922 "Juryless" mural and read what Herbert Bayer wrote to me on August 26th, 1950, about his impressions of Kandinsky during this time:

"Visiting him in his studio in the *Bauhaus* the first time, I believe it was late 1922, I was very much impressed to see him dressed in a black morning-suit and a wing collar, on his left arm the academic type of palette (large tear-drop shaped), painting in the most controlled way without getting any spots on his suit, on one of his very explosive, dramatic pictures. I had always visualized such paintings being created only with one's hair flying."

To be sure, the artist created with outward calm, but, as this sketch for the mural attests, he was motivated by an inner seething. Having complete control over his explosive drama, he was able to compact it into efficient precision. His preferred vocabulary for the majority of the *Bauhaus* works consisted of the perfect circle, the sharp line and the clean form. The syntax was crystalline. The essential content, nevertheless, was the same as in the earlier work: the new pictorial language merely disguised the warmth, transfigured the force into the determinate and rendered subtle the mystery. Beneath the outward calm of the circle lies the deep smolder.

To compare this kind of painting with the *Blaue Reiter* works and regret the loss of what once was, is simply nostalgic indulgence. For a person to be repelled by precision is his right

and is a revealing fact in the biography of his taste; but to assert this personal feeling as a critical pronouncement, as has recently been done (in the third volume of Skira's *Modern Painting*, page 158: "In this picture Kandinsky has eliminated feeling, expression, psychological experience"), constitutes a serious critical lapse. For many, the drama of sharp, straight lines can be as profound and emotional as the enthusiastic swash. Compare the surgeon's first incision to the tearing of a compound fracture.

Kandinsky did not forsake color during his second period. Linear form had become king, that is true; but color was queen—the ruler behind the throne and the bearer of the artist's heart. Because it is impossible for even the best color reproduction to convey Kandinsky's color secrets, let the artist's own words prove his sustained involvement with color. In a letter concerning the exhibition of his drawings in Saarbrücken in 1931, he wrote:

"During the past years I have been interested in—among other things—a special characteristic of the pure black and white: their manifold colorism. There is almost never an actually pure black-white; one can, however, increase the colorism of the black-white very much. Recently I have also made oil paintings which consist only of white and black, and thereby develop a very intense colorism. How strange that these meaningful, extraordinarily rich colors have for so long been considered 'non-colors'—the consequence of superficial naturalism."

Mme. Kandinsky has given Kandinsky's Parisian epoch the descriptive title, "The Grand Synthesis." The name is apt. His Parisian style did not exhibit a resolved conflict, as did the two previous styles, but was a true and happy synthesis of them both. The best elements of the earlier periods were harmoniously blended; they were spiced with the resurgence of the Russian mysticism and fairy-story atmosphere of his formative, pre-*Blaue Reiter* period (1900–c. 1908), and then transformed in the spirit of the general relaxation of the nineteen-thirties and its organic forms. This was not a sudden change. The organic forms—gentle, insidious, whimsical, ferocious, whatever the case may be—can be found growing bit by bit in his mid-*Bauhaus* work.

Relaxation means time for decoration, whether in architecture or in painting. The change from the drawing for *Every Man for Himself* to the painting itself is proof that the impulse for decoration now played a role for Kandinsky (even though this method of transforming the drawing is found only in the building of this particular painting). Ordinarily the drawing for a painting was virtually complete, as can be seen in *White Flood* (see cover). Sometimes, as in the case of *Unfolding*, no preliminary drawing was made, for the artist knew immediately what he wanted.

The serene floating of *White Flood* is replaced in *Unfolding* by compositional verve. This verve is different both from the tumultuous vigor of *Composition 7* and from the propelled austerity of a *Bauhaus* work such as *Yellow Surrounding* in the Museum of Non-Objective Painting. The swing of *Unfolding* is hidden and is driven by a controlled impetuosity. The scrubbed yellow of the large, light V-area snatches our attention before we can inspect the forms that flower at the left. We poise with tension upon this yellow, held uneasily behind the brown curtain at the left and the blue-black one at the right. The eerie feeling of being caught behind upon an essentially forward element—the yellow—is relieved by the large red circle which draws us over and introduces us to the left. We vaguely tumble down the flowering forms, only to rise again with them in a boisterous, up-shot climbing. Now the red circle "gives us out" to a mild drift across the yellow gap. The triangles, light lilac and light pink, thrust us out in front again so that the curved lines below can carom us down to the tiny figures precariously balancing at the neck of the V.

Kandinsky's methods of working, as described in these paragraphs, apply to only a few of his works. To have presented these methods seems almost superfluous, because the impressive feature of his more than seventeen hundred works is their astonishing inventiveness. Nevertheless, there is value in summarizing what the analysis of these works reveals about this pace-setting

artist, for each discovery of meaning and method may help to unravel the next problem of understanding. For example, Hans Hofmann's phrase, "the push and pull on the picture surface," skeptically quoted by *Time* (February 11th, page 71), can be read as a rephrasing of an important factor in Kandinsky's pictorial machinery. Kandinsky's writings and paintings show deep concern with the possibilities of pulling the plane of the canvas apart like an accordion in both directions. Indeed, he was responsible in this respect for raising the "positive and negative space" concepts of *Jugendstil* to the realm of the fine arts. Hofmann's phrase, then, is no sudden aberration, but rather the remark of a participant in an established, sixty-year-old tradition and verifies the importance of this tradition.

The fact that few if any analyses of Kandinsky's paintings have hitherto been published should emphasize the difficulties non-objective painting presents to modern criticism. While analysis of method and composition hardly exhausts the latent possibilities, the very nature of this art and the bewilderment of the public demand such analyses. It is the duty and safeguard of criticism to seek out, as far as is possible, the whole *oeuvre* of any artist whose single work it might judge. Only when the critic has made this effort may he begin, as Kandinsky has said, to understand the meaning of the new pictorial world being revealed and be privileged to make judgments upon it.

On the other hand the public must, like a good sportsman, allow the critic some handicap in his race after the artist. And the public would do well to heed the wisdom of Okakura Kakuzo's caution (in "Japanese View of Modern Art," *Living Age*, vol. cccxxv, pp. 685-89):

"The individuality of the artistic effort forbids that an outsider should meddle in his methods. The painter is but half-cognizant of the secret which makes him a master, for each new idea imposes its own modes and laws. . . . The world has become disrespectful towards Art on account of the proffered familiarity. It feels at liberty to dictate where it ought to worship, to criticize where it ought to comprehend. It is not that the public should not talk, but that it should know better."

Note: A large exhibition of Wassily Kandinsky's work, organized by the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston last spring, has already been seen there, at M. Knoedler & Company, New York, the San Francisco Museum of Art and the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis. It will be on view at the Cleveland Museum of Art until December 7th and at the Lowe Gallery, University of Miami, Coral Gables, Fla., during February and March, 1953.

Forbes Watson



ARTHUR BOWEN DAVIES

THIS discussion is devoted to the rise and decline of the reputation of the American artist, Arthur Bowen Davies; to his elevation as a painter to a solitary eminence and, as a man, to a position of extraordinary power—a unique power in his own field, enabling him to give force and scope to the promotion of modern art which none of his contemporaries was in a position or had the influence to supply; to his descent, at the age of fifty-one, from Elysium (where he had spent his first half century surrounded by nymphs and unicorns) to the arena in which armies of earthbound artists, great and small, were battling for the new ideas against the old; to his passionate efforts to become a modern; to his failure; and to his final retreat back to Elysium whence he came and where he died as mysteriously as he had lived.

Who was this man who walked so quietly and with such assurance into the arms of success? Already, in his boyhood, he showed talent, and, like Winslow Homer, he was encouraged by his parents. He sketched along the Mohawk Valley "trying to portray the trees, the skies and the distant hills exactly as he saw them." That would be like Winslow Homer, too. Curious coincidences for two such opposites! He was interrupted at the age of sixteen by doing clerical

work for the Chicago Board of Trade. He still found time to study drawing. When he was eighteen he went to Mexico as an engineering draftsman, even as Whistler drew for the Coast Survey. In 1886, he arrived in New York and continued his studies at the school of the Gotham Art Students and in the sketch class of the Art Students League. His march to success was as quiet as it was rapid.

According to Bryson Burroughs, a lifelong friend, Davies rejected "the fashionable art instruction of the day . . . and turned to the artists with whom his peculiar genius, as yet unproved, was in accord, Blake, Ryder and the painters of the Romantic school. . . ." Unlike Glackens, Luks and Sloan, Davies did not draw the facts of life as a sketch artist for the newspapers. He illustrated for *St. Nicholas*. In 1888, he exhibited his first painting at the American Art Association. In 1893, Benjamin Altman, induced to do so by William Macbeth, found the money to pay for a trip to Europe. Davies, "broadly eclectic" in his tastes, went straight to the artists who had something for him personally.

Above: Arthur B. Davies, c. 1910(?), photograph Stadler

Such are the early simple facts that the biographers tell about an artist who with the passing years told us, through his production and his collecting, facts which are not simple.

Soon after his return from Europe an event happened to Davies which every artist wants to happen to himself. He found the dealer who was right for him. His alliance with the Macbeth Gallery became complete. Macbeth loved and appreciated his work. He took real as well as profitable pleasure in promoting and selling it. Under his ardent championship, Davies' success was prompt and continued unabated. He and Macbeth became great friends, working in the same building and lunching together daily, served by the janitor's wife. Each must have learned much from the other.

By his friends Davies was thought to be shy and reserved, by his enemies secretive and mysterious. It is true that he kept his address as secret as possible, that he could only be approached through the offices of his dealer and that he barricaded himself against the casual and unplanned. No one ever "dropped in" on Davies. For him there was always work to be done. When he wanted relaxation he decided what it would be, with whom and when. Burroughs says that he had a passion for seeing life. His art gives few hints of this pertinent fact. He was an enthusiast over baseball and often asked his friend, Robert McIntyre, Macbeth's nephew, to

go with him to a game. McIntyre says that Davies knew the averages of every famous player. Davies took long walks and sketched in the suburbs and the country. He watched various athletic events as many artists do. He enjoyed the dancing of Isadora Duncan and loved music. He read "legends, fairy tales, translations from the Greek poets, the drama and poetry of the Elizabethans, the poetry of Blake, Coleridge and Poe." The art of every race and age came under his observation and was represented, sometimes by a fragment, in his collection. His excited pursuit of modern art was paralleled by his antiquarian ardor. He was outstanding among American artists in the eclecticism of his taste and the breadth of his knowledge.

The graph of Davies' reputation rises steadily from about 1895 to 1924, with some of those jiggles which graph draftsmen so delight in to show the ups and downs. These occurred during the years following the Armory Show, when Davies tried desperately to win classification as a modern—in fact to be the Number One modern American. Although he collected modern French paintings and was one of the first American buyers of cubist paintings, he did not, to judge by his own efforts, understand cubism. He apparently thought, in his period of ardent and self-conscious experimentation, that he could superimpose cubism upon his virginal nudes and thereby create a painting in the then prevalent

Study, oil, 26 1/8 x 40 1/8", Cleveland Museum of Art, bequest of Lillie P. Bliss





Along the Erie Canal, 1890, oil, 18 x 40", The Phillips Collection, Washington, D. C.

modern fashion. His cubism was not cubism, it was an appliqué of a semblance.

Although he bruised his knuckles knocking on the portals of modernity, only the outsiders were disturbed by the sound. The insiders did not hear him. This failure, undermining his confidence and his sense of victory, permanently saddened him. New York became distasteful. He spent more and more time in Europe retreating to the love of his first youth, landscape painting. He was then in his sixties, and his paintings—light, charming, sophisticated—were no longer crowded with nymphs and gladsome children. Nor did he continue with his experiments with the new ideas, realizing, I have no doubt, that they had no sympathy with the world which he had created for himself, nor the style which had become a part of him. He devoted himself to his own personal kind of Elysian landscape painting, poetical notes deftly composed, painted with delicate skill that hid every sign of labor. He produced abundantly until the last, and died in an Italian hill town as far removed as possible from the uproar of the revolution in whose beginnings he had played a leading role.

To my surprise, I met him at a cocktail party, not long before his last trip to Europe. Perhaps because I was an acquaintance, not an intimate friend, I had formed the opinion that he was such a time-saver, such a concentrated worker, that the mere idea of a large and general gathering of that sort would have irritated him. To see Davies holding a cocktail glass and talking gaily as I had not heard him talk before was so unexpected that it amounted to a shock. It caused me to focus my attention on him and to ask myself a number of questions. I had seen him only at exhibitions and in his studio—always by appointment—and thought of him as a solitary. That was the strong impression that he made on

me, in spite of the fact that he had friends among the artists, dealers, collectors, museum officials and critics and obviously knew his way about.

He was still the same Davies whose slim upright figure denoted a healthy abstinence from too much good food or too much good drink. His strong features were the same, with the exception of the eyes. These were a shade less penetrating and less confident. As we chatted and laughed, I saw that it was true that in his sixties he was able to say, with sad gaiety, "Oh, well, I'm old-fashioned now." Davies was incapable of making a hypocritical fishing trip to catch flattering denials. After all, in America, where we are more susceptible to the epidemic of ideas emanating from the giant powerhouses of publicity—the great god who watches over our destinies, esthetic, cultural and material—being out of fashion has happened to so many artists that it might be said to be the usual fate. Several artists whom I could mention, if I sought popularity, now pride themselves on being in the fashion. Let them not be impatient. Their turn will come. They too will be out of fashion.

Going back to the Armory Show, since that over-mentioned event cannot be avoided in an account of Arthur B. Davies, two questions arise. What did he do *for* the Armory Show, and what did the Armory Show do *to* him? Except for the answer to these two questions, we do not need for the nth time to run on about the Armory, probably the most over-written exhibition ever held. The argument could be sustained, without too much ingenuity, that had it not been for Arthur B. Davies, modern art in America might not yet be the official art of the schools and the museums. If it had stayed within the precious precincts of Alfred Stieglitz, it might have had a slower growth and rooted deeper, might possibly have developed without round

tables (minus artists) held by popular magazines, might have escaped from the torrential clouds of words that rain upon it now. (It's slightly fantastic to separate the memory of Stieglitz from a rain of words, since no man was more lonely out of the hearing of his own voice. But that's a gentle aside.)

By 1913 Davies occupied a unique place, which he had reached without the aid of a clique, a group or a gang. Until the Armory Show, his single affiliation with an American group resulted in the episode of "The Eight." Otherwise he went alone, unadvertised. He used none of the tricks of self-promotion with which too many artists waste their time and lower the dignity of their profession. He beat his own path, and it led up the mountain. He gained an eminence that few artists reach in their lifetime. He was neither academic nor radical. His art was untouched by the art of his fellow artists; it had no influence on them, and he had no followers. He was that remarkable phenomenon, an artist who enjoyed an immense success and at the same time was respected by other artists. He arrived at his exceptional position of power without, as the politicians say, making any commitments to pressure groups. He was the one man capable of making the Armory Show possible. It was, in Walt Kuhn's words, "Davies' party."

With the aid of Walt Kuhn's advertising genius, Walter Pach's knowledge of who was who in modern art, and with the backing of a hundred other free-thinking artists, Davies organized the exhibition and with its success reached the

climax of his power. As I said at the beginning of this discussion, Davies was fifty-one years old, with an established reputation and a fully developed style, when he answered the artists' call to descend from his carefully protected solitary height and enter the battle for modern art at the time when the fighting was hottest and victory far from assured.

Alfred Stieglitz's gallery at 291 Fifth Avenue was the first dealer's gallery to bless modern art. His devotion to its advancement antedated the Armory Show by several years. On the other hand, Davies worked with a power and a scope that rushed the movement forward, carried it to other cities and other galleries. Through his great influence on Miss Lillie Bliss and other collectors, his efforts in promotion may have resulted, as Kuhn claims and many people think, in the foundation of the Museum of Modern Art. If Davies did not perform all these miracles, at least his contribution to their accomplishment was very great indeed.

How did it happen that the artists chose Davies to be commander-in-chief of the war against the academic? His art is unscorched by problems, social or other, untouched by the realities of life. It pictures a mythical play-world, serene and happy, where no tears are shed, no appetites are vulgar. All is joyful make-believe. Nothing is real except the observed and selective landscape painted with charms and incantations. This listing of a few of the ingredients in Davies' subject matter is not made as a reflection on his art, since quality in art is not won by choice of

Dancing Children, 1902, 26 x 42 1/4", Brooklyn Museum, photograph Peter A. Juley & Son, courtesy Whitney Museum of American Art





From *Green Coverts*, 1905, oil, 22 x 17", collection Mr. & Mrs. Wendell T. Bush, photograph Peter A. Juley & Son, courtesy Whitney Museum of American Art

subject. Nothing that Davies painted suggests the brave warrior donning his armor and drawing his sword to battle for the great new cause. If it wasn't the art of Davies that made him the predestined leader, what was it?

It was his influence and power as a man. His Utopian art arrived in the world of realities at the precise moment when the more prudent American collectors were delighted to take it to their bosoms. They had been bombarded with platitudinous landscapes in museum sizes. Far from being ready to accept modern art, they had not yet accepted impressionism. As for American realism, its day had not yet come. To this public—small compared with the art masses of today—a public in search of idealistic landscapes into which it could retreat and forget the treadmill of business, Arthur B. Davies brought pictures which served the buyer's sentimental purposes

better than anything the academic manufacturers were able to produce. They were not sized to impress prize-awarding juries or museum purchasing committees. Modest in their proportions, they looked best in the intimacy of the home. They were better painted, more imaginative and more knowing than their larger mechanical rivals. Moreover, they gave the collector more than idealistic landscape. Davies had invented a world of nymphs, happy little girls, mythological animals and other playful elements, which he placed with sensitive decorative skill. At times he became entangled in sentimentalism. On the whole his art had a special appeal to the more cultivated collectors who were then buying American paintings.

Duncan Phillips has labeled Davies, as an artist, "a designer of dreams." As a man, Davies was a gifted administrator with a sense of order

in his business affairs that was not dreamy. Thus he was able in 1913 to contribute to the success of the Armory Show the backing of a man holding an outstanding position among artists and collectors, and his own rare abilities as a good administrator. That would seem to answer the question: What did Davies do for the Armory Show?

As to the question of what the Armory exhibition did to Davies: It tore him away from a life scheme by which he had made himself a master of himself. It broke through the barriers of his long-cherished working solitude. With the success of the Armory, the clamor which followed, the new friends clinging tightly to his coattails in their desire to share in his success, Davies was tempted to desert the unattached quietude that he had so long cultivated. He dove into the onrushing current of modern art only to find that the current was blocked, first by World War I and later by a sudden recrudescence of the forces of chauvinism in art. He grew weary from his organizing efforts to push modern art, and above all from his efforts to be himself a modern artist.

The word "important" had not begun its reign. "Characteristic" was then the pet. Buyers could often be heard repeating the phrase: "I think it's very beautiful, but I don't feel that it's characteristic." Picasso had not yet atom-bombed that bright thought. While Davies for a few years exhibited "uncharacteristic" paintings, the graph of his fame, though jiggling, still pointed upward, so that it was not surprising when in 1924 Duncan Phillips, for whom collecting has been a lifelong love, devoted one of his handsome publications to a symposium entitled *Arthur B. Davies: Essays on the Man and his Art*. The book is made up of essays by re-

viewers and museum men distinguished in the field; it is sound evidence that the reputation of Davies was still high. In taking quotations out of their context, I am not doing so in a spirit of agreement or disagreement, but merely to help the graph draftsman in the direction of his line.

Mr. Phillips referred to Davies as "the most individual of living artists. . . ." He also wrote that Davies "is the most comprehensive artistic intelligence that has yet, in America, attempted to express itself in paint." Royal Cortissoz wrote: "He has had a dream, a dream of beauty, and it is the urge of beauty that has driven his brush." Edward Root compared Davies to Botticelli and noted his "passion for correlation." Referring to the music room that Davies had decorated for Miss Lillie Bliss, Frank Jewett Mather, Jr. wrote: "Since Fragonard laid down his brush, nothing so entrancing has been done in domestic decoration." All of Mr. Phillips' contributors assume that Davies was a genius. He had no difficulty in finding reviewers accepting this assumption in 1924. His difficulties would be greater in 1952, a natural result of the passage of time.

Somehow I find the idea of Fragonard as a domestic decorator piquant. I've always thought of him as an undomestic decorator. Miss Bliss liked to note that the all-over decoration by Davies, in which there were no ladies swinging high, was light where the walls were in shadow and darker where the walls were in light. She would move a precious object of art, which Mr. Davies had probably chosen for her, from place to place, to show that each part of the wall was a perfect background. "It's a perfect background for beautiful objects," she repeated to me as if she thought that I, and not Mr. Mather, were thinking of Fragonard.

Unicorns, 1906, oil, 18 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 40 $\frac{1}{4}$ ", Metropolitan Museum of Art





Decorations for Music Room of Miss Lillie P. Bliss, detail, c. 1923, courtesy Forargil, Inc.

So much for our reputation graph in 1924. The evidence shows clearly that the line was upward. Our next stop is a large gallery in the Metropolitan Museum where, in 1930, the Davies Memorial Exhibition was held. To reach this station our draftsman is compelled, in the interests of truth, to draw a slightly downward curve. The large retrospective show is a fearful test for an artist to meet, especially if the size of the exhibition gallery is out of all proportion to the home sizes of the paintings. Davies' paintings appeared at a disadvantage in his memorial show, although they had been selected and arranged by his most sympathetic and understanding friend, Bryson Burroughs.

Burroughs did not include in the exhibition more than one or two of Davies' efforts to be modern. He referred to them slightly: "He clothed his personality in the trappings of a subsequent development." Then came the classic remark that tells as much about Burroughs and the taste of 1930 as it does about Davies: "His world had become, in the slang of the times, *abstract*" (italics Burroughs'). On the other hand, he pays this tribute to the work of Davies as a whole: "The fact that all of the works of his multifarious and exuberant career are so clearly and consistently infused with his own personality proves at least the authenticity and integrity of his genius."

As late as 1930, genius was a signpost on the graph. But when we move to the end of the line the graph takes the direction of a toboggan slide. For in 1952, when the critics of seven New York dailies, weeklies and art magazines valiantly stepped forward to augment the Whitney Museum of American Art's purchasing funds by holding an exhibition of their preferences in American twentieth-century paintings, none of the critics tapped Arthur B. Davies for membership in the new fraternity. His close friends, Maurice Prendergast, whom he introduced to New York, and Walt Kuhn, whose ad-

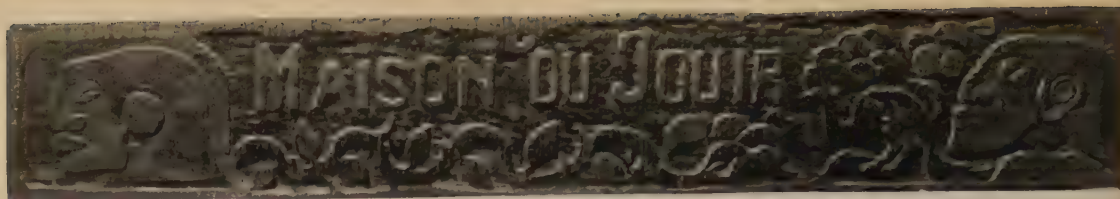
vancement he helped so much, were there. John Sloan, William Glackens, George Luks and George Bellows were there. All but Sloan were represented in the Davies collection, whose four hundred fifty items ranged through the past and present history of art. John Marin, Alfred Maurer, Max Weber, Homer and Ryder, also represented in the Davies collection, were there. Stuart Davis and a group of newcomers who have arrived since Davies died, were there. But no Arthur Bowen Davies.

Our graph had reached the bottom of the page. There was not room for another jiggle. The next move of the pen will be upward. The draftsman put board and paper and pen away, knowing that he would not be called upon to draw the upward line until, following the inevitable laws of change, our era of tensions is succeeded by another era—perhaps an era of more powerful tensions, perhaps an era of peace when the spirit of decoration, now accursed, may rise again. Then our draftsman will be called on to start the upward line, for Davies was primarily a decorative artist. After all, we have only a handful of fresh ideas to work on in a given period. When they become stale with repetition, the younger artists are the first to feel the need of a change and to gather a handful of new ideas.

What would Miss Lillie Bliss, to cite one of those who revered Davies, have thought if she had lived to see that the critic captains of 1952 could not find a berth for the "designer of dreams" on their ship of art? Would she have blamed her beloved Museum of Modern Art for leading the public's taste so far astray that the graph of her idol's fame had reached the bottom line? She and several other ladies and gentlemen of her generation might have turned their hearts against the critics. People do sometimes. And yet, had they stopped to think, they would have remembered that it was their mysterious god himself, Arthur B. Davies, who was commander-in-chief when the revolution started.



Daphnes of the Ravine, oil, $32\frac{1}{8} \times 24\frac{1}{8}$ ", Philadelphia Museum of Art,
photograph Peter A. Juley & Son, courtesy Whitney Museum of American Art



Annie Joly-Segalen

PAUL GAUGUIN *and* VICTOR SEGALEN



IN Paris around 1900 the only review favorable to the younger painters was the *Mercur de France*, yet it did not venture to champion Gauguin. Despite the support of such friends as Charles Morice and André Fontainas, all Gauguin's efforts to find publication in the *Mercur* had failed. The editorial board in 1902 refused a long article he sent from the Marquesas Islands, entitled *Raconters de Rapin* or *Gossip of a Dauber*. To be sure, Gauguin sought to prove in it that under no circumstances "do painters need either support or instruction from men of letters." One readily understands the unwillingness of the litterateurs who read the manuscript to publish a work which damned them so roundly.

At this same period, Gauguin was in open revolt against the French administration in the Islands. He appealed to the *Mercur* to publish a long letter he had addressed to Monsieur Petit, Governor of Tahiti—an incendiary missive in which he assailed the entire colonial organization.

The editors cautiously filed away this letter, which was not to be published until fifteen months after Gauguin's death (in *Mercur de France*, August, 1904, page 569) and, lest they incur the wrath of the Ministry of Colonial Affairs, they were careful to point out that they printed it solely "to shed true light upon the personality of the much-mourned painter."

This obvious hostility towards Gauguin's writings did not efface the memory of his talent from certain minds. When in 1902 Rémy de Gourmont learned that Victor Segalen, a young naval surgeon, had been appointed to serve on

the gunboat *Durance*, stationed at Tahiti, he told Segalen about Gauguin and advised him to visit the painter.

Unfortunately, because of the vast distances which separate the islands, this meeting never took place. It would have been of great comfort to Gauguin, who was wasting away in the Marquesas—partly from numerous physical ailments, but partly also from spiritual isolation and an utter lack of understanding in all quarters. In Victor Segalen he would have found a physician to care for him, a friend to confide in and an artist with whom to exchange ideas.

When Segalen landed in Papeete in January 1903, there was little talk of Gauguin. True, the government was preparing its case against him as defender of the natives, and soon thereafter was to find him guilty; but in so far as the painter was concerned, the only answer Segalen received to his questions was: "The man is crazy; he paints people with pink hair!"

Victor Segalen had barely reached Tahiti when he was ordered off to the Tuamotu Islands, which had been ravaged by an incredibly violent cyclone. French warships sped immediately to the rescue, and an Italian vessel, the *Calabria*, stood by off Papeete for several days to lend assistance.

The disaster took such a grievous toll that certain islands were totally ruined. On those that remained habitable, Segalen had to care for the wounded and to provide food for the survivors, meanwhile arranging the evacuation of the entire population from other islands.

The young surgeon of the *Durance* was invariably the first man ashore. Busy as he was, bandaging, vaccinating and looking after his patients, he nevertheless listened to the lamentable stories the natives had to tell. Under these circumstances he soon felt very close to the Maoris he had but glimpsed at Tahiti; he saw them live in all their beautiful and noble simplicity, and on deck in the evening he would listen to them as, heedless of their recent ruin, they sang their picturesque folk songs.

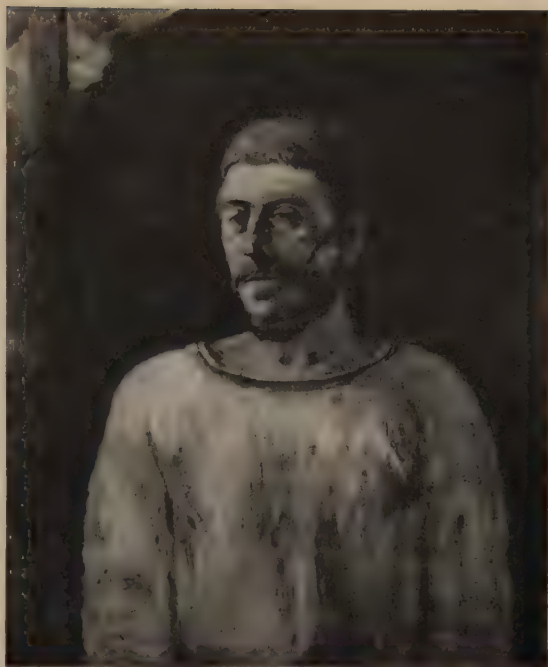
As he grew to know them better, he was alarmed to note how few Maoris there were. Recalling the heart-rending statistics he had read here and there, he was obliged to acknowledge their accuracy. The Maori race was dying out because their land had been discovered a century before by foreign ships which brought with them diseases, unknown poisons and new creeds and laws.

To forget the present, to go back to the Maoris as they were about 1800, to describe them in the purity of their primitive beliefs, to evoke that gentle and free existence which alone suited them, to portray the amazed and joyful welcome they tendered the newcomers, to report how the misdeeds of our civilization had led to their ruin—what an admirable subject for a writer! It appealed urgently to Victor Segalen, who, having already published a medico-literary thesis, proposed to pursue a double career as physician and as author.

In preparation for the book which he was to call *Les Immémoriaux*, Segalen would have liked, before turning to works by foreign travelers, to hear the Maoris themselves tell the old legends which had once been transmitted orally from generation to generation. But the Maoris seemed to have forgotten their past. They had memorized other tales; they knew nothing of their ancient heritage and cared less. Indeed, they were surprised that anyone should be interested in such bygone things. Segalen's investigation, a disappointing failure, was soon cut short when his mission of rescue was accomplished.

The *Durance* steamed back to Tahiti without visiting the Marquesas, even though the cyclone had not spared Hiva-Oa where Gauguin lived. In a letter to G. D. de Monfreid, dated February 3rd, 1903, Gauguin told of the cyclone's effect on his own hut. All night long, he reported, he had feared that his dwelling might be swept away by the swollen waters of the river. But having discovered only scant damage in the morning, he concluded: "All's well that ends well. The cost of repairs will amount to only a hundred francs."

During the next few weeks, Gauguin was to suffer from his troubles with the administration, his trial, his conviction and his increasing illness. He died suddenly on May 8th of that year. Segalen, then in Tahiti, learned the news



only in June or July. In August, the *Durance* brought him at last to the Marquesas. And Gauguin's name immediately figures in his travel diary:

"My emotions of other days—the days of my pilgrimage through the Symbolist school—came to life again in these faraway islands, thanks to Gauguin's relics. Bits of him remained here and there in the Administrator's office: his portrait, very oblique and displaying a thick-set neck, and especially a case of papers into which I would have been so eager and curious to delve. . . ."

There follow long extracts from the *Note-books for Aline*, a miscellany of recollections and thoughts written for the painter's daughter, which has never been published. Among the fragments is the *Genesis of a Picture*, which describes the artist's intentions in regard to his painting, *The Spirit of the Dead Watching*. This work has been published and frequently reprinted, but Segalen, no doubt, was the first to read it. He must have done so with emotion, too, because it revealed in Gauguin the same desire that Segalen himself entertained—to resuscitate the Maoris of old.

"He was beloved by the natives," Segalen concluded after having questioned these natives carefully and long. "He defended them against the gendarmes, the missionaries and the whole stock of our murderous civilization. Gauguin was to some extent the mainstay of the ancient cults." A curious clay statuette in front of Gauguin's hut, a piece of carved wood, and the tale of a woman frightened by the Tupapaou, showed



the young surgeon how Gauguin had upheld the ancient cults and expressed their great beauty in his work. In all this Segalen found a sure path to guide him to his goal; he could write in all sincerity: "I may say that I had seen nothing of the country and of its Maoris until I scanned and almost lived Gauguin's sketches." And that great composition which conjures up all the anxiety of the dying Maori race, Paul Gauguin's *Whence Do We Come?* was finally to come to life in this distant island for Victor Segalen, who was ever in search of true documentation. Thus for the first time one evening he heard "a very aged woman, the only one whose mind still preserved the memory of bygone things, recite the legend of the origins, the earliest settlement of the islands, and the seventy-one generations born since the landing of the Twins without father or mother."

Gauguin's friend and neighbor, the pastor Paul Vernier, was also there, "a tireless interpreter; then there were some young Maori women who listened to the immemorial story with a certain astonishment; the man Tioka, Gauguin's friend, commented on the hallowed sayings, while the aged woman crouched in one corner, her eyes gazing into space, her wizened hand beating time to punctuate with an oscillation each name of the long dynasty she recited.

"As she spoke, she kept attentively manipulating for reference a plait of fibres interspersed with blossoms—mnemonic means given further precision by knots recalling the names and the sayings she recounted."

Here, so close to the spot where Gauguin had only recently died, how could Segalen fail to sense the painter's spiritual presence during that evening over which *The Spirit of the Dead* no doubt watched?

A few days later at Tahiti, "where there was much ado about Gauguin's estate," Segalen declared himself clearly. "I am at present wielding bludgeons as I wage an artistic campaign in favor of Gauguin," he wrote. "The few sorry articles he possessed, and a few pictures and manuscripts are coming up for sale at Papeete. By a monstrous irony, these relics are wretchedly housed in the offices of the *Pomaré* palace, the main hall of which is occupied by a dull exposition of paintings by a third-rate official named Bopp du Pont. Naturally Bopp detests Gauguin. And naturally I despise Bopp's paintings."

But there was another monstrous irony, too, which escaped Segalen's notice, but was later to be disclosed by G. D. de Monfreid. The duty of sorting out and filing Gauguin's papers had been entrusted to yet another painter who was much to the fore at Tahiti. This gentleman—Lemoine by name—admitted having "put in order the drawings, sketches and papers." Many of them, he thought it amusing to add, had been "dumped on the rubbish heap" by his kind offices. And, he finished wittily, "that was the





proper place for them!"

To conclude this astounding cycle of irony, and no doubt to reward Lemoine for serving the public powers so handsomely, he was officially commissioned to paint a picture the French government was to present to the Queen of Italy in gratitude for the aid the *Calabria* had brought to the cyclone-victims in the Tuamotu Islands! Let us hope that Her Majesty never learned that only a piece of execrable taste deprived her of the Gauguin canvas that might have enriched her gallery.

The Gauguin sale took place in September, 1903. Because Gauguin, only shortly before, had sent a bulky consignment to Paris, there were few paintings. Certain incidents that occurred were later reported by Victor Segalen in his *Tribute to Gauguin*, which prefaced the publication of Gauguin's letters to G. D. de Monfreid. In this article Segalen does not enumerate everything he managed to "buy in the course of the hazards and fortunes of bidding at auction." But these objects figure at great length in the list of his purchases as valued by the court appraiser. On line 6 of this document we read: "One Picture (*Niagara*)-7 francs." Presented to the bidders upside down under the title of *Niagara Falls*, it was in reality a *Breton Landscape in the Snow*! The four pieces of carved wood that adorned Gauguin's last dwelling in the Marquesas Islands were described as "boards with inlay." Gauguin's self-portrait, which fetched thirty-five francs, was the same pathetic profile which bears the inscription "On the Threshold of Golgotha."

Other canvases in poor condition, the painter's easel, his drawings, his papers assembled in oddly sorted lots and bought mainly

to save them from being scattered, must have formed a weird hodgepodge when Segalen brought them home that evening to the Tahitian house he used when ashore.





Notable as these purchases were, Segalen regretted having been forced to yield to others certain objects he coveted. There were, for instance, the painting called *Motherhood*, which fell to one of his fellow-officers, and the very fine head of a *Maori Woman* carved in the round. The sketch that he made of the latter in order to remember it is today the sole surviving testimony of this work; unfortunately the original was destroyed in a fire during World War II.

No proper inventory of the rich acquisitions Segalen brought back with him to France could have been made without the help of G. D. de Monfreid. During Gauguin's lifetime, Monfreid had been his closest friend; and after his death, Monfreid stepped forward as the chief defender of the painter's work. He therefore graciously welcomed the young naval surgeon who was the first to bear him tidings of Gauguin's last few months. Together they sorted out the letters, papers and documents Segalen had purchased in Tahiti. Finally, both at Monfreid's and at the house of the great collector Fayet, Segalen was privileged to admire Gauguin's paintings in all their splendor. They made, he wrote, a "thundering impression" on him.

Returning to Brest where his medical duties aboard a battleship afforded him some leisure, Segalen completed the work he had sketched out in Oceania. *Les Immémoriaux* was published in 1907. His purpose in this book, he confided to Monfreid, had been to "write down" the Tahitian people, just as Gauguin had seen them in order to paint them: "in their own selves; in their essence; from within, outward."

And Segalen seems to have accomplished his aim, judging by the comparison René Lalou makes in his *History of Contemporary Literature*: "*Les Immémoriaux*," says Lalou, "possesses all the vast breadth and relief of Gauguin's noblest and most beautiful paintings."

Note: The four woodcarvings from Gauguin's house in the Marquesas, *Maison du Jovir* (reproduced on pp. 370 and 372), as well as the painting *Breton Landscape in the Snow* (25 x 35"; p. 373), were acquired at the Gauguin sale at Papeete in September, 1903, by Victor Segalen and are now in the possession of his family. At that sale Segalen also acquired the *Self-Portrait: On the Threshold of Golgotha* (p. 371), which he later sold to Ambroise Vollard, and made the sketch (p. 373) of Gauguin's carved Head of a Maori Woman, which was sold to M. Goupil and was destroyed during the recent war. The woodcut *Crucifixion* (p. 374) incorporating elements of a design from a Marquesan club made up of heads of Tiki, the god of Creation, is reproduced by courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

The approximate dimensions of the woodcarvings are: those reproduced on page 370, 97½ x 19½"; those on page 372, left, 65 x 19½"; right, 79 x 19½".

Contributors

ROLAND PENROSE was one of the founders of the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London and is now its Vice-Chairman. A close friend of Picasso's, he is himself a painter in the surrealist style, as well as a poet. In 1939 Gallery Editions in London published his *The Road is Wider Than Long: An Image Diary of the Balkans*, illustrated with photographs taken by the author. As his article indicates, Mr. Penrose was one of the principal organizers of the first International Surrealist Exhibition held in London in 1936, and is a discriminating collector of modern art.

KENNETH LINDSAY is now professor of art history at Harpur College, Endicott, New York. His article and a dissertation on Kandinsky, written for the University of Wisconsin, are the outcome of research done while in Paris on a Fulbright grant, working closely with Mme. Kandinsky.

An old friend and frequent contributor, FORBES WATSON was formerly an associate editor of *MAGAZINE OF ART*. Readers with long memories who want to keep us up to snuff, however, are apt to hold up to us as a model *The Arts*, which Mr. Watson edited with liveliness and authority until it ceased publication in 1932. His most recent article in *MAGAZINE OF ART* was "John Sloan" in last February's issue.

ANNIE JOLY-SEGALIN is the daughter of the French poet Victor Segalen, whose relationship to Gauguin is discussed in her article. During the past ten years she has devoted herself to making more widely known the work of her father, who died in 1919 at the age of forty-one. She is currently editing for posthumous publication a work of Segalen's on Chinese sculpture, illustrated with photographs taken by him on an archeological expedition he organized and directed in Central China. The present article was translated for *MAGAZINE OF ART* by Jacques Le Clercq of Queens College.

Forthcoming

Articles in our January issue will include: "Diego Rivera in Italy" by JEAN CHARLOT; MAX DVORAK's "El Greco and Mannerism," translated by John Coolidge; "Man Ray" by PAUL WESCHER; NORRIS K. SMITH, "Meaning in Modern Architecture"; and "Indian Rock Painting" by FREDERICK R. PLEASANTS.

Letter to the Editor

Sir:

Summer before last my model and I climbed a high mountain near Los Angeles, with cameras and tripod on our backs, to take Kodachromes and black-and-whites of the splendid mountain scenery and also some nudes.

When the Kodachromes came back from Rochester, two were missing, but a letter informed

me that these two were illegal and could not be delivered by mail or any other way, to me or any other person. Eastman Kodak requested my permission to destroy them.

I replied politely if indignantly, that my pictures were art, that I knew much about art, and certainly enough to distinguish between art and obscenity. I refused permission to destroy the transparencies, but told them to retouch if they wished, as I would probably retouch them anyway in making prints.

Eastman replied virtuously that their attorneys, who knew all about these things, said that the completely nude figure was illegal, adding euphemistically, "Even if covered by the hands." They included the gratuitous information that they won't even do Kodachromes of this type for art schools. They wouldn't retouch the pictures, but they offered to cut them in half and send me the upper halves!

Fortunately, however, the camera had been on a tripod. Asking the model to hold the pose, I had taken the same pictures in black and white, as close to the Kodachromes as I could get them.

I consulted two attorneys of my acquaintance, showing them the correspondence and the black-and-whites. They both assured me there was nothing illegal about the pictures. As they explained it to me, the law merely defines obscenity as "inciting to lust"—and they agreed that my pictures were not in that evil class.

But to retrieve my pictures I would have to sue Eastman Kodak Company in a Rochester court. This would be expensive and awkward. Since Eastman had not refunded or offered to refund my purchase price, it was suggested that I might complain to the postal authorities that Eastman was using the mails to defraud. . . .

It seems almost unbelievable that in these enlightened days of atomic bombs and Kinsey reports, the female figure should still be considered lewd; that a large photographic concern in this land of freedom should be practicing medieval mummery and puritanical prudery. . . . A private company, with a monopoly on Kodachrome, has set itself up as unofficial, unelected, undemocratic, judge of art and morality.

If an artist cannot get his painting hung in one gallery, he can try another. If the author cannot get one publisher, he can try another. The artist and author at least possess their rejected works. The Kodachrome photographer, however, cannot even *see* his work—and is out money and effort besides. . . .

I hope this letter will expose a serious threat to American art, and contribute to photographic enlightenment. I wish some one would help finance a test case against Eastman.

We have freedom of speech and the press—won at great cost and one of our priceless possessions. Now let us have freedom of the lens!

GUSTAV ALBRECHT
Altadena, California

Film Review

Curtain Call (The Art of Degas); *I Remember the Glory (The Art of Botticelli)*; *Light in the Window (The Art of Vermeer)*. Produced by Art Film Productions for 20th Century-Fox; written by Mildred Barish Vernon; from research done by Marilyn Silverstone, associate producer; directed by Jean Oser; photographed by Cyril J. Knowles. Music by Jacques Belasco; commentary spoken by Peter Allen. Each 35 mm; color; sound; 1 reel. Distributed by 20th Century-Fox Film Corporation, 444 West 56th St., New York 19. Apply for rates.

The three titles listed above are the first to be released of a long-awaited series of seven, filmed in Europe by a special production unit for 20th Century-Fox and now being widely shown in the United States and abroad. For those interested in the destiny of films on art, this series should attract attention for several reasons. To begin with, these are, to my knowledge, the first art films to utilize the financial and technical resources of a major American film company—or, to put it more bluntly, this is the first time that “big money” has been available for their making. In the second place, the films have been shot in color from original works of art, with the co-operation of an impressive array of museum authorities, and in cities such as Paris, Florence and Delft. And thirdly, they have from their inception been designed for general release as short subjects in feature theatres—as distinct from “art houses”—and have been planned with the wider audiences to be found in those theatres in mind.

Naturally the results clearly bear the stamp of each of these factors. Certainly it is refreshing to see films on art made with such highly professional technical standards, even if at times the manipulation of the camera tends to be slick rather than sensitive. It is also apparent that sufficient footage must have been shot to allow a latitude in the editing not often enjoyed by the makers of art films, who are usually forced to operate on severely austere budgets that necessarily cramp their style at all stages of production.

KINESIS Presents FILMS

CARAVAN. Jordan Belson brings the painting-movement into the serious realm of art.

OLD MACDONALD HAD A FARM. An effervescent little deluge of drawn farm motifs by John Whitney.

EXPERIMENT IN FILM AND MUSIC NO. 3. By Wilner & Montemezzi. Drama as photographic imagery.

HOWARD STREET. A rough document. By Leslie Turner.

for descriptive list of new films write:

KINESIS, inc.

566 Commercial St., San Francisco, California

The money allocated to this series has been spent where it counts—in shooting directly from works of art in a process which for the most part faithfully records not only the color but also the texture of the originals. This is in pleasant contrast to the other recent major attempt to attract mass audiences to films on art, *Pictura—Adventure in Art* (reviewed in MAGAZINE OF ART, February, 1952). In the latter case, expensive packaging in the form of elaborate brochures, high-powered publicity, big-name endorsements and glamorous stars as narrators were applied to a miscellany of shorts of unequal quality by various makers.

In the present series the bait designed for the public at large is of a very different sort. Rather than having been wrapped like packaging around the films after they had already been made, popular appeal was implicit in their conception. The premise seems to have been that the public could be beguiled into concentrating on cultural subjects if “human-interest” themes were provided as a bridge between the world of art and contemporary, everyday life. Happily, however, those responsible for this series resisted the usual temptation to provide this human interest through romanticizing the artists or pointing up sensational events, real or imagined, in their lives. The emphasis has been kept on the artists’ works and on their contribution *as artists*—not on their private lives, neuroses or psychoses. Instead, the central core of each film has, so to speak, been provided with a frame—just as in *Curtain Call* a young couple who have bought a reproduction of one of Degas’ ballet pictures bring it in to a shop to be framed. The reminiscences of “the Paris Degas knew” this event evokes for the owner of the shop lead quite naturally into views of Paris and Parisian life, seen in alternation with details of Degas’ paintings. This is a legitimate story setting, if one must have one at all, and appropriate to the main theme. Less successful because more forced is the idea introducing *I Remember the Glory*: a young veteran seeing a Botticelli in a museum recalls the thrill of his first sight of that master’s work in an exhibition of “liberated” paintings he had visited as a soldier in Italy during the war. In the course of this film, the equation of Botticelli’s art with peace and freedom, and the interpretation of Savonarola as a martyr to the cause of freedom of speech, are somewhat questionable, and even apart from this the ideas are more numerous, abstract and complicated than could successfully be presented or grasped in a ten-minute short. In *Light in the Window*, too, the story, which in unctuous clichés stresses “the simple things of life, home and family,” seems as irrelevant to an understanding of Vermeer’s art as it is banal.

But the significant fact remains that these framing narratives *have* been kept separate from the central presentation of Degas, Botticelli and Vermeer. The artists’ work and respective styles are on the whole presented in a fashion that, while

drastically simplified, is neither essentially distorted nor vulgarized. The distinction is a highly important one, and a promising augury for the future. For if films of this sort win acceptance with the public for which they were designed, perhaps producers in the future will not feel that they have to coat the pill of culture with quite so saccharine a dose; they will consequently devote less footage to the human-interest angles, and relatively more to the works of art, their settings and background. What gives one hope is the comparable evolution that over the years has taken place in the presentation of classical music on the radio, for it is no longer felt that one movement of the *Nutcracker Suite* is the ultimate that the audience will take in the way of long-haired music.

A specially praiseworthy feature of these films is their skilful interweaving of works of art with the subjects or settings they depict. In *Curtain Call*, scenes of fashionable or humbler quarters of Paris alternate with Degas' representations of high life or artisans at work; shots taken at the races merge into his paintings of that favorite sport; "live" ballet rehearsals and performances fade out into his portrayals of such themes. In *I Remember the Glory* there are some fine views of renaissance buildings in Florence and of the Tuscan landscape Botticelli knew. Most harmonious of all is the blending of beautiful scenes of Delft as it is preserved to this day, and of Dutch courtyards and interiors, with the magic rendering of such subjects by Vermeer, in *Light in the Window* (recently awarded first prize for an art short at the Venice Film Festival). Good camera work and editing allow the eye to pass smoothly from life to art and back again with no jarring transitions in one's sense of scale. This is an interesting revival of a device used years ago in such films as *Art and Life in Belgium*, but recently less in favor than the attempt to have the camera take the spectator into the picture space exclusively. It is this reviewer's conviction that the marriage of art and reality, when done as expertly as in this series, can provide adequate human interest even for the lay audience, making a resort to extraneous story-lines unnecessary.

HELEN M. FRANC

Recent Art Film Releases

Art and Seeing, produced by Allen Downs and Jerome Liebling for the University of Minnesota. 16 mm; black and white; sound; 15 min. A study of the rich material that everyday environment offers to the art student as a source of forms. Available from the Department of Art, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis 15. Apply for rates.

A *Phantasy*, produced for the National Film Board of Canada. 16 mm; color or black and white; sound; 8 min. A surrealist abstract film produced and animated by Norman McLaren; music by Maurice Blackburn combining synthetic sound and three saxophones. Available from National Film Board of Canada, 1270 Avenue of the Americas, New York 20. Rental \$3; sale \$75.

Book Reviews

Films on Art, 1952, ed. by William McK. Chapman, New York, The American Federation of Arts in association with the Spaeth Foundation, 1952. 160 pp., 38 illus. + frontispiece in color. \$4.

Films on Art, 1952 is a valuable book. Following two checklist editions of a *Guide to Art Films* issued in 1949 and 1950 by MAGAZINE OF ART, the present volume, bound in hard covers, is primarily a critical and descriptive listing of four hundred fifty-three motion pictures that deal with the visual arts. It is intended to serve as a reference guide for all who are involved in the selection and programming of films for schools, museums, film societies and so forth. Each title entry is followed by a complete annotation of physical data about the film, and this is followed in turn by a descriptive and critical paragraph based, in most cases, on the editor's appraisal after screening. In addition to this basic collection of information, there are six introductory essays dealing with various aspects of the art-film phenomenon. The book itself is handsomely designed and well printed, with large legible type on heavy coated stock. The film listings are enlivened by the inclusion of a number of stills, and there is a color frontispiece from the celebrated *Images Médiévales*.

In publicizing this book, The American Federation of Arts has emphasized the importance of the collection of introductory essays. In view of this (and the fact that these pieces fill a third of the book), these articles should be evaluated in terms of their utility to the person for whom the book is intended—one who is actively involved in the problems of selecting, programming and using motion pictures.

The opening essay, "Pioneering in Films on Art" by Iris Barry, is a mixture of history, anecdote and opinion which would constitute a pleasant preface; however, since there are two others preceding it, it comes a little too late to fill that role.

The following essay, "A Short History of Art Films" by Arthur Knight, more than makes up for these deficiencies. In tracing the origins of the art film, Mr. Knight has in effect compiled a catalogue of the monumental works in the field, as well as presenting an excellent survey of the contemporary situation. This essay is easily the second most important reference source in the book. The history will be of great interest to film students and, more important, will give the newcomer an exciting introduction to the field.

Dr. Charles Gaitskell's contribution, "The Art and Craft Film in General Education," is a very general discussion of the role of films in contemporary art education programs. Because it takes the form of a report on current practices

in film utilization, it will probably be of more interest to producers and distributors who are looking for a trend than to the educators for whom it was presumably written.

"Creative Programming" by Miss Perry Miller is, in terms of useful information, the outstanding essay in the volume. It is the only article I have read in which basic principles of film programming are thoroughly discussed and explained. Although it is not generally realized (or perhaps even suspected), programming—the selection, sequential arrangement and presentation of films—is a vital link between the producer and his audience. It is conceivable that the film field suffers more damage from slovenly and unimaginative presentation than from bad films. Miss Miller's discussion of thematic programming, of the ways in which one film can be used in many different contexts and for different purposes, of the role of program notes, publicity and program introductions, should be required reading for everyone who has anything to do with films.

Dr. H. W. Janson's contribution, "College Use of Films on Art," offers encouragement to professors who are hesitant about the use of motion pictures in the curriculum and makes sound suggestions about the proper role of films at the college level.

The final essay, "Films on Art in the Art Museum" by Patrick T. Malone, is an excellent companion to "Creative Programming." It gives clear, step-by-step instructions on the mechanics of finding, scheduling, booking and publicizing films, as well as valuable suggestions on keeping records, preparing budgets and handling audiences. The only aspect not covered is that of projection facilities—information which does not really belong in this book, anyway. After reading and digesting the writings of Mr. Knight, Miss Miller and Mr. Malone, the prospective film user should be ready to operate. Only experience can teach him more.

The essays are followed by the film catalogue. The entries, descriptions and evaluations are generally quite satisfactory. Certainly there is no other reference source which covers the field so thoroughly. The physical descriptions of the film (running time, distributor, color, sound or silent, rental rates and sale prices, terms of release, date and production credits) seem to be complete and accurate. The inclusion of descriptive and critical paragraphs or sentences after each entry is the greatest improvement (in terms of utility) that has been made over the earlier pamphlet editions. Mr. Chapman's descriptions and evaluations are adequate, and his criticisms are well handled. Films which deserve special attention receive it, and those which don't get short shrift. I hope that in future editions the present descriptions can be expanded to include more content information, and that the number of art films in general release will have increased

to a point where the editor can be even more critical in his evaluations. A discouraging thing about this part of the book is that there are so many instances of "apply for rates" or "release date to be announced," or titles which are not listed because they have not yet found distribution outlets—although we have heard about them for months (or even years). This, of course, is not the fault of the book, but of the 16-mm commercial field, which seems at times to be engaged in bottling up rather than distributing its stock.

This section of the book has some faults which should be noted. One is the anachronistic practice of listing the number of reels in a film as well as its running time in minutes. Such information has no place in what is predominantly a 16-mm listing, and if it must be included should certainly not precede the actual running time in the format of the description. Another fault, and a serious one, is a number of glaring compositor's errors, quite unusual in such a well-produced volume. The description of *Belo Horizonte*, for instance, instead of following its title, has been transposed to follow another description four pages further on.

These, then, are the components of the book. Do they combine to yield a reference work which is (in the words of the announcement) "indispensable to all whose task it is to create film programs of any kind"? Because the information is here in a readily available form, one must answer "yes," but with considerable reservations.

A book such as this will be used as a tool. It will be thumbed continuously, annotated, underlined, check-marked and corrected as conditions change; within a year or two it will be out of date and a new tool will be needed. At that time the present book will perhaps be cut up for card or evaluation files. Why then is it printed on such beautiful paper? Did it have to be cloth bound? Why the expensive color frontispiece? Are all those essays *really* necessary? And, above all, why should it cost four dollars? In its published form it probably cannot sell for less, but one wonders if, from the user's point of view, it is actually worth that much. A film catalogue need not and should not be a beautiful publication. It should be durable but expendable. One should be able to handle it casually without feeling disrespectful. In attempting to elevate this publication above the pamphlet category, the A.F.A. has overshot the mark. Surely there is a satisfactory middle ground—some solution which will recognize the fact that many to whom such a publication would be most valuable, useful and enlightening may find the present price a deterrent to buying a copy.

GERVAIS REED
Instructional Materials Center,
University of Washington

In his 1951 Bampton Lectures Mr. Mumford gives a brief summing-up of his philosophy, linking, as he always does, the most comprehensive problems of civilization and the future of our civilization with specific details from art and technology. Three closely interacting approaches can this time be distinguished: the tracing of historical developments that reveal relations of technics to art, considerations of the state of affairs today and suggestions for the shaping of the future. The first of the three points of view leads to outstandingly interesting results. These are chiefly incorporated in lectures three and four. Here Mr. Mumford takes two examples, printing type and the reproduction of pictures in print and color-print, and illustrates his main theme from their behavior in history.

The theme is this. The desire for invention and improvement of tools is as old as mankind. Orpheus, the maker of images, and Prometheus, the maker of tools, art and technics, both stand at the beginning of human civilization. Their inventions, the creating of images and the making of objects, are separate and distinct from the outset, but in handcraft the two come together, the imaginative and the mechanical being present in equal parts and benefiting from each other. Thus out of the two came the machine, and out of the machine as a servant the machine as a master, until now we have reached the point where the machine has impoverished art and is on the point of eliminating art and destroying civilization. "Man has become an exile in this mechanical world: or rather . . . a Displaced Person." There is only one solution: "to restore man's balance and wholeness."

All this is familiar from Mr. Mumford's previous writings, and if we are ready to search further, from William Morris. But whereas Morris' answer was in practice to keep out of the way of the machine and concentrate on a revival of craft among artists and the appreciation of craft among laymen, Mr. Mumford is ready to allot to the machine a circumscribed and valuable field. Printing type is the case chosen. It did away with "the repetitive part of the process" of making books, and thereby freed the esthetic impulse from technical toil. But it also split art from technics for the first time, and it established the criteria for machine art. Type is rightly called type. Machine art must concentrate on the typical. It must go on refining and refining until the type is ready. And after that—take the history of the pin or the violin—no further development is needed, unless function or technical means change drastically. Hence let there be no stylists to make "models that have undergone no essential change look as if they had." Such "conspicuous waste," this kind of "picking your pocket," should not be

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accepted. That it is, illustrates the deficiency of our time.

The case of reproduction and color reproduction is even more poignant in its implications. Born of the wish to make the unique accessible to the many, the woodcut and the copper engraving were part of that general progress of democracy which is also represented by the growth of realism in the art of the fifteenth century. The Holy Virgin becomes a human mother; later, the still-life or landscape becomes as valuable as the devotional picture. The Dutch realists of the seventeenth century "produced the best color photographs that yet have been made." But they had to produce them by hand, and as with the coming of the nineteenth century the time was ripe for the mechanization of graphic art and of painted imitations of nature, photography and photogravure, photolithography and color photography developed; until today by these means a surfeit in the availability of pictures has developed which blunts one's sense to the point of not even being able to concentrate fully on a unique masterpiece in a church when one goes to see it. Again mechanization has gone on from being a blessing to becoming a curse.

Some years ago, with other instances and much more detail, Siegfried Giedion also followed the way in which mechanization took command. The last pages of his book were an attempt at proposing remedies. Mr. Mumford's attempt is presented with greater power in the handling of language but with no greater power of conviction. Change your hearts, he says, use restraint, don't allow yourselves to be led by automata. And he also says: Spengler in his prophecy of an age to come, which would be an age of business enterprise instead of lyric poetry, of engineering instead of music, of organization instead of creation, has been shockingly right, but need not remain so.

Now to me that is very doubtful. And if Mr. Mumford uses the renewal of Late Roman Italy by means of Christianity, he does not improve his case. Spengler, I would say, was undeniably right here. It was not a renewal of an old culture, but the start of a new, and a start out of barbarity. We read Gregory of Tours and are shocked by the unscrupulous violence of the sixth century. That Dark Age had to be gone through for a new beginning of civilization to become possible. And even here Morris, though only occasionally, saw as deep as anyone; so I conclude with a passage he wrote in 1886:

"Maybe: man may, after some terrible cataclysm, learn to strive towards a healthy animation, may grow from a tolerable animal into a savage, from a savage into a barbarian, and so on, and some thousands of years hence he may be beginning once more those arts which we have now lost."

What then remains for us to do, those of us who don't want to abandon what we cherish in our civilization—the creative beauties of modern architecture, for instance, which is by no means, as Mr. Mumford says, a worshipping of the machine, but in its imaginative grouping of machine-made parts, in its free planning of identical units, in its establishment of relations to nature, the soundest of the visual arts of today? The answer must, I submit, be one of a more limited optimism than Mr. Mumford's. Our civilization cannot renew itself. Twentieth-century mankind is not going to turn back. It must continue on its self-chosen course. But you and I can yet work for a healthier civilization—the parent by passing standards of ethics and, if you like, esthetics, to the child, the teacher to the pupil, and the scholar to an unknown reader. Let them be individually conscientious and not worry about the immediate future. Greek civilization collapsed and Roman civilization collapsed. Yet their discoveries, their philosophies, their works of art—accidentally preserved, it is true—reached the West, when the West had grown up to understand that fragmentary heritage, and helped once again to fertilize the soil.

NIKOLAUS PEVSNER
London, England

Helmut A. Hatzfeld, *Literature Through Art: A New Approach to French Literature*, New York, Oxford University, 1952. xvii + 247 pp., 100 illus. \$7.50.

The approach and the theme of this book are timely. Illustrations from the arts and parallels from pictures and architecture have become features of many literary courses, thanks to the increased visual aids and to the demand for "integration" in education. The teaching of art is more commonly related to the history of culture and to the social background than it used to be. Some extensive studies have been written in French and German on the comparative study of literature and art, but not even the best are fully satisfactory. This volume on the mutual assistance that French art and French letters can bring to each other was written in English by an eminent German-born scholar. It was awarded the Modern Language Association-Oxford prize and is intelligently and artistically illustrated.

It would be too much to say that Professor Hatzfeld's painstaking and erudite monograph has triumphed over the many difficulties of elaborating a method for such a parallel study and of applying it with brilliance and with the required diversity of nuances. Only an extremely original art historian like Wölfflin, Focillon or Panofsky, or an unsystematic but occasionally genial and inspired writer like Malraux, could have achieved the task; and such a man would probably have been careful to embrace less than is here covered. Six chapters treat of ten centuries, grouped as

romanesque and gothic epoch, flamboyant and renaissance, "baroque classicism" (as Professor Hatzfeld insists upon calling the French seventeenth century, not too happily), rococo, romanticism, impressionism and surrealism (the latter rather summarily sketched). The illustrations are ably selected. The literary texts are often much less apposite, and the connection between the two is not established convincingly. The author, who is a scholar of unusual modesty, draws lavishly from secondary sources or quotes overabundantly from casual remarks of previous critics.

The author proceeds chiefly through parallels. Villon's ballad to the Virgin written at his mother's request, for example, is analyzed in relation to the *Coronation of the Virgin* by Enguerrand Charonton: a few details thereby receive some light. The sensuous boldness of the painting of Gabrielle d'Estrée in her bath is compared to one of Ronsard's sonnets calling upon the peasant girl Marie to get up as soon as the lark has sung—a much less convincing *rapprochement*. In spite of the frail link that the phrase "baroque" or "classical baroque" may claim to establish between the two, Racine's allusions to night and Georges de la Tour's chiaroscuro have little in common. It is doubtful whether one gains much by drawing parallels between Pascal's fright at "the infinite spaces" and the "typically baroque feeling" of such spaces as expressed in the gardens of Versailles. Pascal's "*mystère de Jésus*" suffers from an even worse con-

fusion through being compared to Pierre Mignard's or to Le Brun's painting when it is religious in subject. Some stray sentences from Rimbaud placed alongside Van Gogh's *Night Café* as "a tableau of modern decay and disintegration" or compared to Gauguin's *Jacob Wrestling with the Angel* raise even more objections in the reader's mind and are likely to mislead the young art student.

In fact, Professor Hatzfeld's volume is especially valuable for the disagreement that it will arouse and for having unambiguously pointed to the perils with which this type of study is strewn as soon as it is made systematic. The final chapter in which he summarizes the parallels proposed and defines the fields of comparative study of literature and arts accepted as legitimate is mostly descriptive and enumerative. No vigorous attempt at formulating a method is sketched. The study remains exterior to the deeper problems which it should pose, conventional in its accumulations of parallels and too often content with traditional labels. The French romantics, for example (Lamartine, the painters of the age) may be called classical as compared to other romantics outside France; yet Ingres' nostalgic quest for serenity, the obsession with mystery of Chassériau, the intensity of the feeling in *Le Lac* are in no way illuminated or closely characterized by the use of categories like classical romanticism or any other. Forcing a parallel between literary impressionism (Goncourt, Verlaine) and pictorial impressionism has again very

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limited value. Indeed, the whole concept of the unity of an age, expressed in its fundamental truth by the diverse media of the different arts, is an hypothesis dear to philosophers and historians of culture, but one which is incessantly contradicted by facts. A writer's imagination generally owes far more to painters of the past whom he admired as a youth than to his contemporaries of whom he remains unaware. Delacroix was far more indebted to Racine, even to Voltaire, than to Hugo or Balzac, whom he detested. Cézanne admired Baudelaire, who was twenty years older, but neither Zola (after their estrangement) nor Rimbaud.

Hatzfeld's courageous, learned and rash attempt should obviously be read and followed with great care. It would be deplorable to instil more vagueness and more looseness in the history of art than there is at present in that discipline. Any criticism, even comparative, which leads one away from the essence of the work itself may be enriching only for those who are capable of subsequently drawing closer to its essential "uniqueness."

The Oxford University Press deserves much praise for the illustration and the presentation of this attractive volume. A substantial number of mistakes may nevertheless still be found, in the quotations in particular, occasionally also in the text. Thus Voltaire's stanzas to Mme. du Chatelet were not written at the age of seventy-four, but in 1741, eight years before her death, when Voltaire was forty-seven. "Toned down" (p. 125), "mamelles" (p. 150), "proceed" (p. 154), "Impressionisme" (p. 184), "impératrice" (p. 194), etc., are misspelt. *Jocelyn* (p. 158) is divided into "épisodes," not episodes. The first line from Hugo (p. 142), should have an "et" after the verb, and the third should read "*des agiles lanciers*" and not "*aigles*." Leconte de Lisle's *Midi* (p. 192) should read "*épandu*" in line 1 and "*point*" in line 5. In Rimbaud's *Bateau Ivre* on p. 200, "*criards*" is omitted and the text of the third stanza quoted is faulty. P. 206, "*tiédís*" should be feminine. Ozenfant (p. 192) is not preceded by a "D"; Cézanne's formula (quoted on p. 192) cannot be dated "after 1907" since the painter was then in his grave.

HENRI PEYRE
Yale University

Walter Raymond Agard, *Classical Myths in Sculpture*, Madison, University of Wisconsin, 1951. x + 203 pp., 97 figs. \$5.

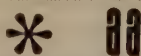
This is a rather small book, printed apparently with considerable care. The ninety-seven illustrations are of varying quality, but their layout on the page is nicely balanced with caption and text, on glossy paper, to make a visually pleasant book. Within this format Mr. Agard takes up and handles with the utmost earnestness problems one would have thought had been laid to rest, exhausted, at least a generation ago.

He begins with an enthusiastic endorsement of the classical myth as subject for contemporary art, pointing out that "once such abstract ideas as Victory, Peace, and Opportunity were personified, they could obviously serve any place or time." Even the local gods have conveniently accumulated "universal significance," so that Apollo can be a handy symbol of the fine arts; Venus of feminine beauty; Neptune of the control of the seas; and Prometheus of the resistance to arbitrary authority. As a clinching argument for contemporaneity he notes that "In our own time the legends of Prometheus, Hercules, and Icarus have provided sculptors with the material for plastic expression of Man's effort to control the physical world."

For a while he ponders the correlative problem of how much is to be learned from classical form. Here he takes a broad-minded position, adjuring artists against too literal copying of classical models and suggesting that a freer adaptation would be preferable.

He then proceeds to a very sketchy history of sculpture that uses mythological subject matter, beginning with the changing styles in Greek and Roman times and going through the medieval to the modern. His selection of illustrations, to a considerable extent, and his judgments throughout, as he himself makes clear in his preface, are based on a preference for "monumental sculpture," a term which he elucidates at the end of the history when he cites as important American practitioners of this style Gaetano Cecere, Lee Lawrie and William Zorach.

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His final pages are devoted to summary and deduction. This is his message to the art world: He notes Toynbee's observation that today's eclecticism, with no one dominant thread of unity, is a sign of a disintegrating civilization. "Should we then," he writes, "expect our artists to follow one type of traditional expression which preserves the pattern of our Western culture best? If so, the argument might well be made that in sculpture the Greek designs are basic, and we may properly ask our artists to use them."

Artists have been rejecting this kindly but ineffectual advice, whenever it has been given, for so many generations now that it is an almost ghostly experience to hear it voiced again today. Presumably, however, there are still artists who, having received commissions for public monuments, are leafing through glossaries for the correct symbols through which to celebrate appropriate abstractions, and who can be inspired by the reminder that these symbols have been used many times before. For them this book was written.

BLANCHE R. BROWN
Metropolitan Museum of Art

Bernhard Karlgren, *A Catalogue of the Chinese Bronzes in the Alfred F. Pillsbury Collection*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota, 1952. 228 pp., 114 pls. \$25.

Bernhard Karlgren's publication of the Pillsbury collection of Chinese bronzes is one of the most handsome books on art that has appeared in recent years. Unfortunately, after the reader has thumbed through the magnificent plates, complete with an unusual amount of detail, including views of tops, bottoms and interiors, he will be disappointed. Most of the early pages have the text facing the photograph of the object; as a result, it becomes more than ordinarily irritating to find that on occasion this principle is violated, so that it is necessary to hunt for the plate under discussion.

The text, despite the linguistic erudition of Dr. Karlgren, is woefully weak. The great Swedish sinologist adheres to his well-known dating system based on certain "Yin" characters which just does not hold up. Strangely enough, although Karlgren resents the application of stylistic criteria to vessels of the Shang and Early Chou periods, he consistently applies these criteria to inscriptions, without recognizing the stylistic changes of the bronzes that are obvious to the trained eye.

Much of Karlgren's discussion is concerned with the terminology for the shapes of vessels. He particularly distinguishes between the *Yu* and the type of vessel commonly known as the owl *Yu*. He sees these as entirely different forms. This is due to his weak approach to the iconography of the vessels. The beaks that Karlgren recognizes as protruding from the lids of *Yu* are actually symbols of the bird in the animal mouth, which is identical to the symbolism of the owl vessels. Dr. Kim Che-won has clearly demonstrated that this is a representation of birth. The lower part of the *Yu* simply contains additional symbolism. On the other hand, Karlgren tries to equate the *Kuang* and the Middle Chou *Yi* as identical vessels. Although *Kuang* may be a poor term for the vessel commonly known by that name, these two forms are far different from the *Yu* and owl *Yu*.

Throughout the book the term *t'ao-t'ieh* is used for the monster mask. Florence Waterbury is attacked for her attempt to define the monsters as bulls, rams, water-buffalo, tigers and tigers-with-horns. This writer is completely in accord with Miss Waterbury on all but the last category. When Karlgren does describe an animal head as a ram, it is a rodent-like creature without the distinguishing mark of the animal—its horns (Plate 20).

Many of the descriptions are accompanied by a bibliography of previous publications. These are incomplete and probably explain to some measure why more pertinent analyses of the style and iconography have not been made. It would have been useful to have indicated which vessels belonged to sets now in other collections.

Karlgren is to be congratulated on his rebuttal of Hentze's theories. On the whole, however, the artistic analysis lacks penetration. It is sad that this superb collection did not receive the thorough study that is its due. Mr. Pillsbury loved the pieces and collected them with rare discrimination. His memory deserves a richer scholarship than is offered in this picture book.

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Sir John Davidson Beazley, *The Development of Attic Black-Figure*, Berkeley, University of California, 1951. xiv + 127 pp., 49 plates. \$6.50.

Sir John Beazley is internationally recognized as the greatest living authority on ancient Greek vase painting. Numerous anonymous masters owe recognition of their artistic existence to his discrimination, which isolated their style from that of known contemporaries who sometimes signed their vases; while the documented work of these latter artists has been augmented by his identification of their respective hands among unsigned products and broken fragments.

All the more reason to welcome this present volume of lectures given at the University of California as a book which will make his erudition and insight available in a wider sphere. Except for the addition of notes (most of them references to enable the reader to find vases shown in the lectures but not reproduced), the text is presented as delivered—clear and supremely readable for the interested layman or student.

Professor Beazley treats not only the developed Attic black-figure of the sixth century B.C., but the long antecedent evolution going back several centuries to the geometric style. Nor does he stop with the late sixth century and the displacement of black-figure by the new red-figured technique; he carries the history of the ware down through its last hieratic manifestations in Panathenaic amphorae of the fourth century B.C. The development of style throughout these centuries is concentrated in the productions of certain outstanding masters, a method which brings those far-away artistic personalities to life. This is interwoven with the evolution of vase shapes and consideration of changing emotional approaches to the stories or scenes depicted. In his distribution, actually, iconographic presentation in its widest sense (related to daily life and literature) outweighs that of stylistic analysis. In the chapter devoted to the François vase, for example, the study of its formal character or style is restricted to a few scattered sentences. The reader must regret a lost opportunity to share further Professor Beazley's perception in this regard, despite the charm and penetration of his discussion of subject matter.

The publication is in every respect a handsome representative of that fine book production we have come to expect from the University of California's press. The plates are excellent collo-

types and, whenever possible, derive from photographs rather than drawings. It is perhaps too much to ask that, in the printing of these plates, the publishers might have departed from the practice of making silhouetted cut-outs, which is particularly lamentable in reproductions of Greek vases. While it supposedly makes for a more attractive plate, this is achieved at the expense of accurate portrayal of sensitive vase contours.

PHYLLIS PRAY BOBER
Wellesley College

Henry F. Lenning, *The Art Nouveau, The Hague, Nijhoff, 1951. 143 pp., 55 illus. Guilders 21.*

This is the first book in English devoted entirely to the important transitional style of the *Art Nouveau*, which by breaking with the revival styles of the nineteenth century and experimenting with the new materials produced by the Industrial Revolution paved the way for contemporary design. Mr. Lenning has confined his study to the *Art Nouveau* in Belgium and France during the decade from 1895-1905 and illustrated it with many of the works of the leaders of the movement: Van de Velde, Horta and Hector Guimard. The bibliography lists the periodical articles of that decade which provide source material for the history of the style. One of the most interesting chapters is that on the salons and expositions through which the style was introduced to the public, most notably by the Maison Bing at the Paris Exposition of 1900.

For the student who wishes to use Mr. Lenning's book, it would have been useful to give the present address of Victor Horta's famous house at 12 rue de Turin. The street name has been changed to rue P.-E. Janson. It would also be a convenience were the source of every illustration given. The book is most attractively designed, but the chapters are not numbered in the text, which makes it difficult to consult the footnotes when using the book for reference. As the footnotes at the end of the book are by chapter, the extra step of consulting the table of contents is required.

Although the *Art Nouveau* was not the "fungus style" its critics derided, most of the shop fronts and hotel and restaurant décors have disappeared, so it was high time to salvage the works from oblivion. This Mr. Lenning has most ably done, reinstating the style in its rightful place in the cavalcade of modern art.

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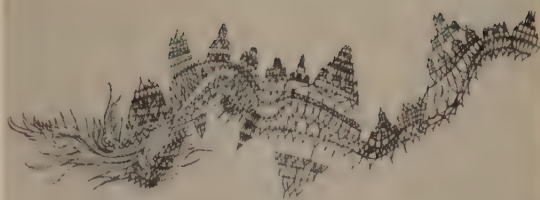
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- Digby, George Wingfield, *THE WORK OF THE MODERN POTTER IN ENGLAND*, London, John Murray (dis- tributed by John de Graff), 1952. 174 pp. incl. 64 illus. \$3.50.
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- GENTSE BIJDRAGEN TOT DE KUNSTGESCHIEDENIS, Deel XIII, 1951, Antwerp, De Sikkel, 1952. 284 pp., incl. 89 illus.
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Paul Klee, *Flood Swamping Cities, 1927*, from Carola Giedion-Welcker, *Paul Klee*

- GUIDE TO DUTCH ART, The Hague, Government Print- ing and Publishing Office, 1952. 145 pp. + 151 plates. fl. \$9.75.
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